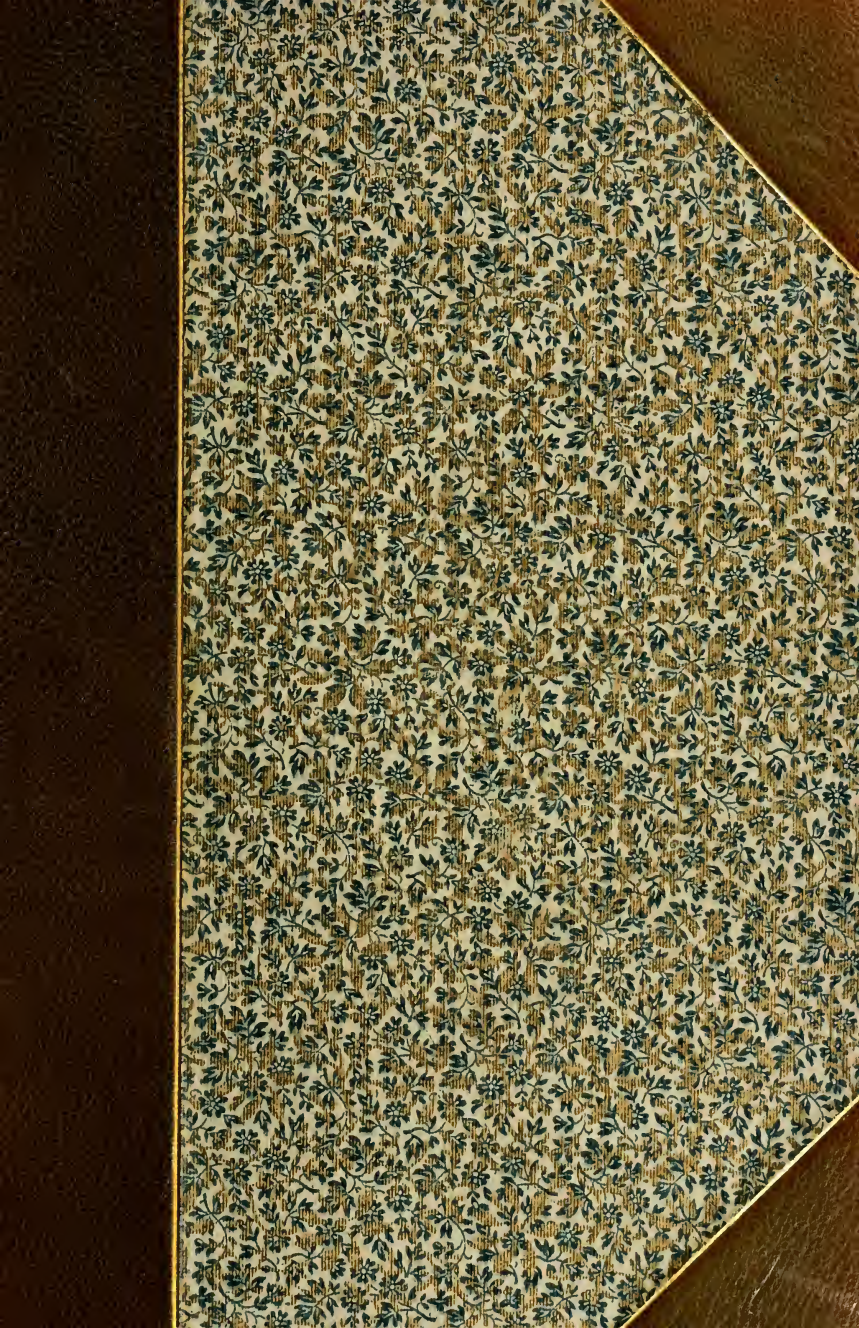
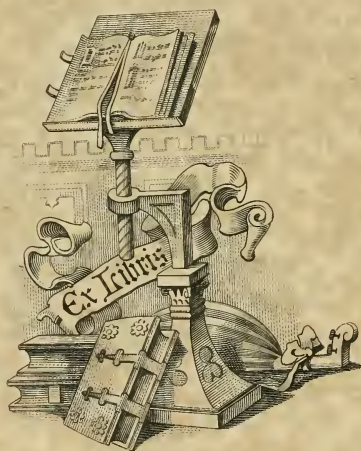






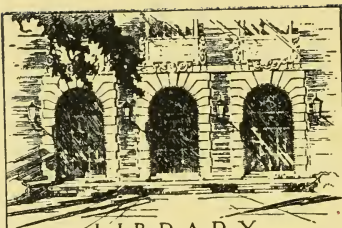
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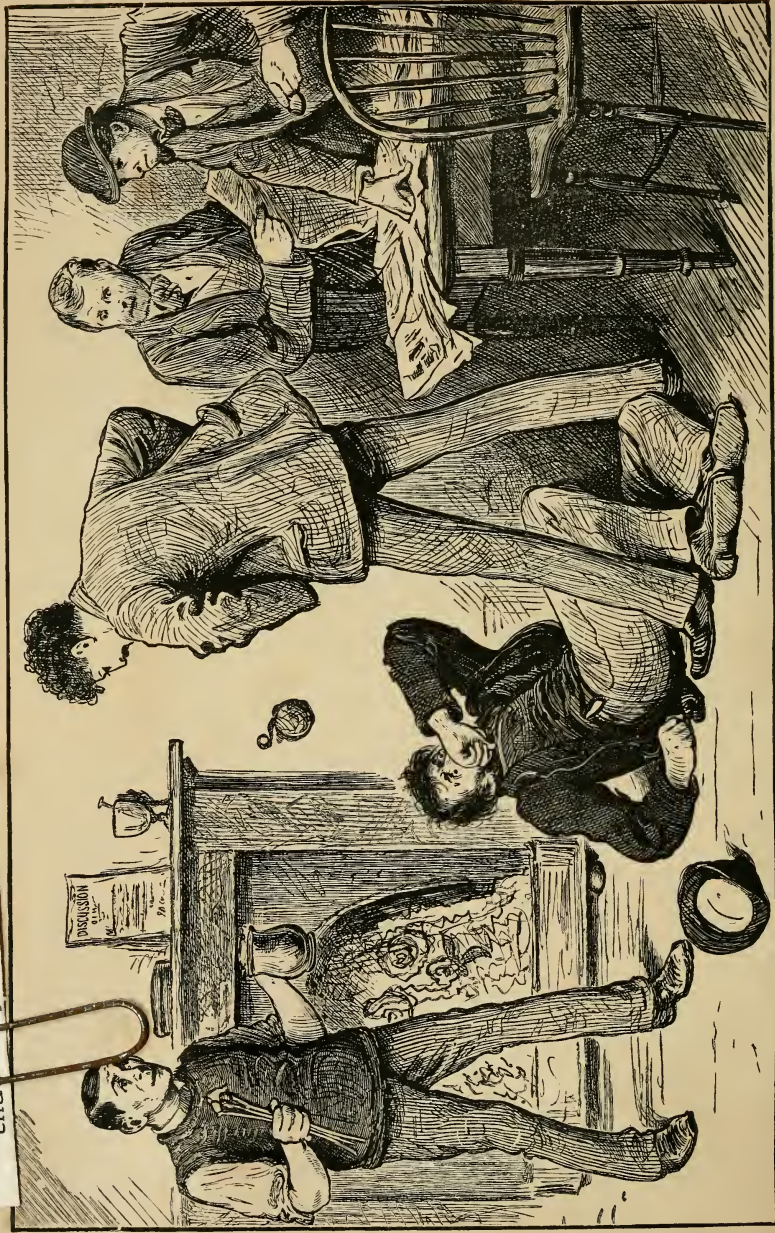
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ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN

VOL. II.



"After he'd knocked him down, Harry invited that chap to stand up and have it out."



"After he'd knocked him down, Harry invited that chap to stand up and have it out."

ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN

An Impossible Story

BY

WALTER BESANT



WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRED. BARNARD

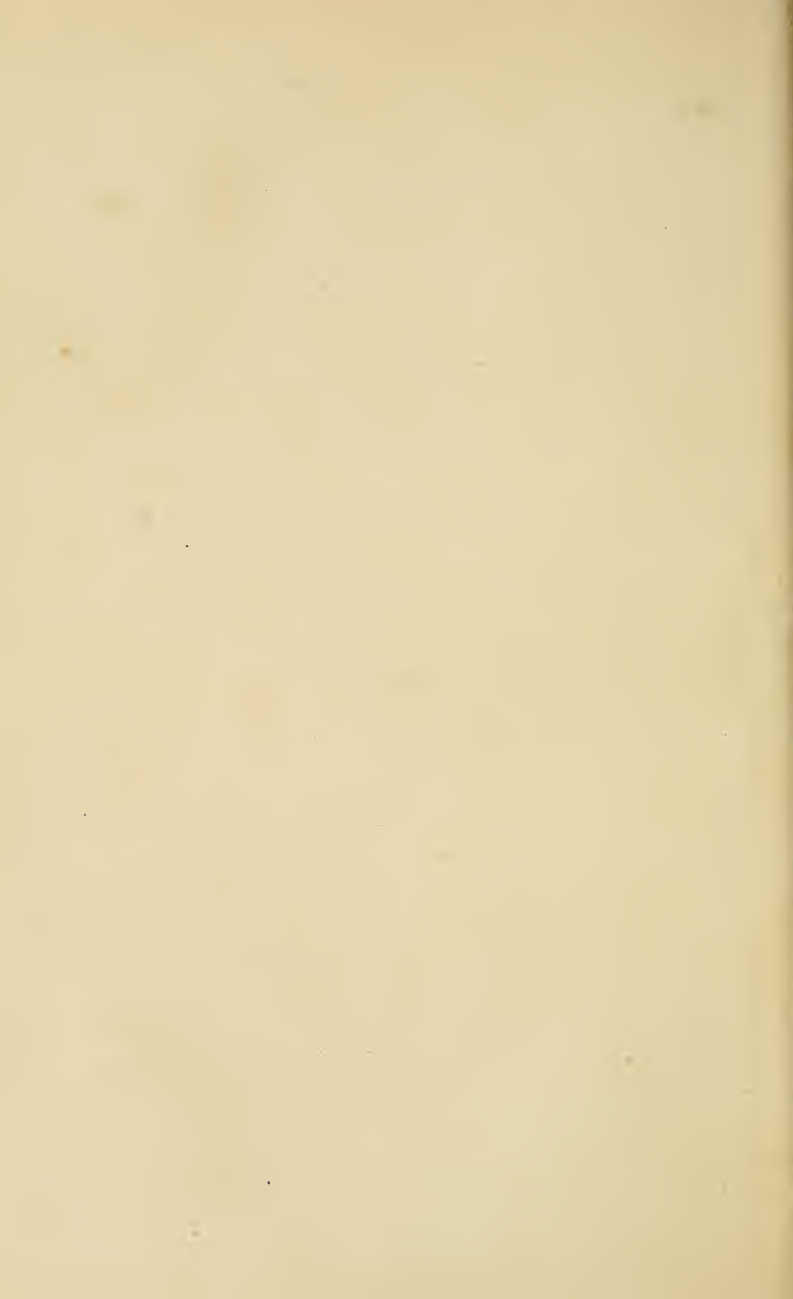
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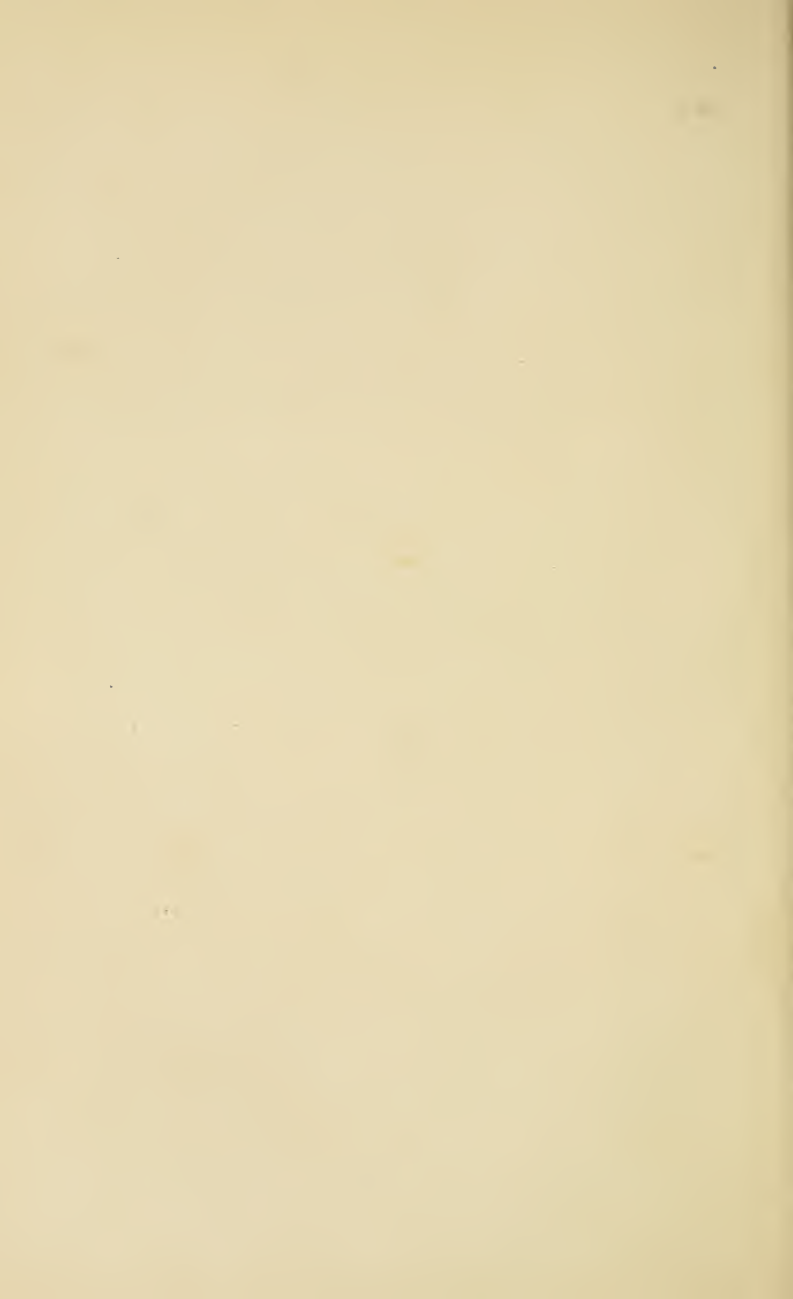
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CONTENTS
OF
THE SECOND VOLUME.

CHAPTER	PAGE
XV. A SPLENDID OFFER	1
XVI. HARRY'S DECISION	19
XVII. WHAT LORD JOCELYN THOUGHT	33
XVIII. THE PALACE OF DELIGHT	46
XIX. DICK THE RADICAL	65
XX. DOWN ON THEIR LUCK	78
XXI. LADY DAVENANT	94
XXII. DANIEL FAGG	111
XXIII. THE MISSING LINK	129
XXIV. LORD JOCELYN'S TROUBLES	142
XXV. AN INVITATION	159
XXVI. LORD DAVENANT'S GREATNESS	178
XXVII. THE SAME SIGNS	198
XXVIII. HARRY FINDS LIBERTY	206
XXIX. THE FIGUREHEADS	237
XXX. THE PROFESSOR'S PROPOSAL	257
XXXI. CAPTAIN COPPIN	271
XXXII. BUNKER AT BAY	293



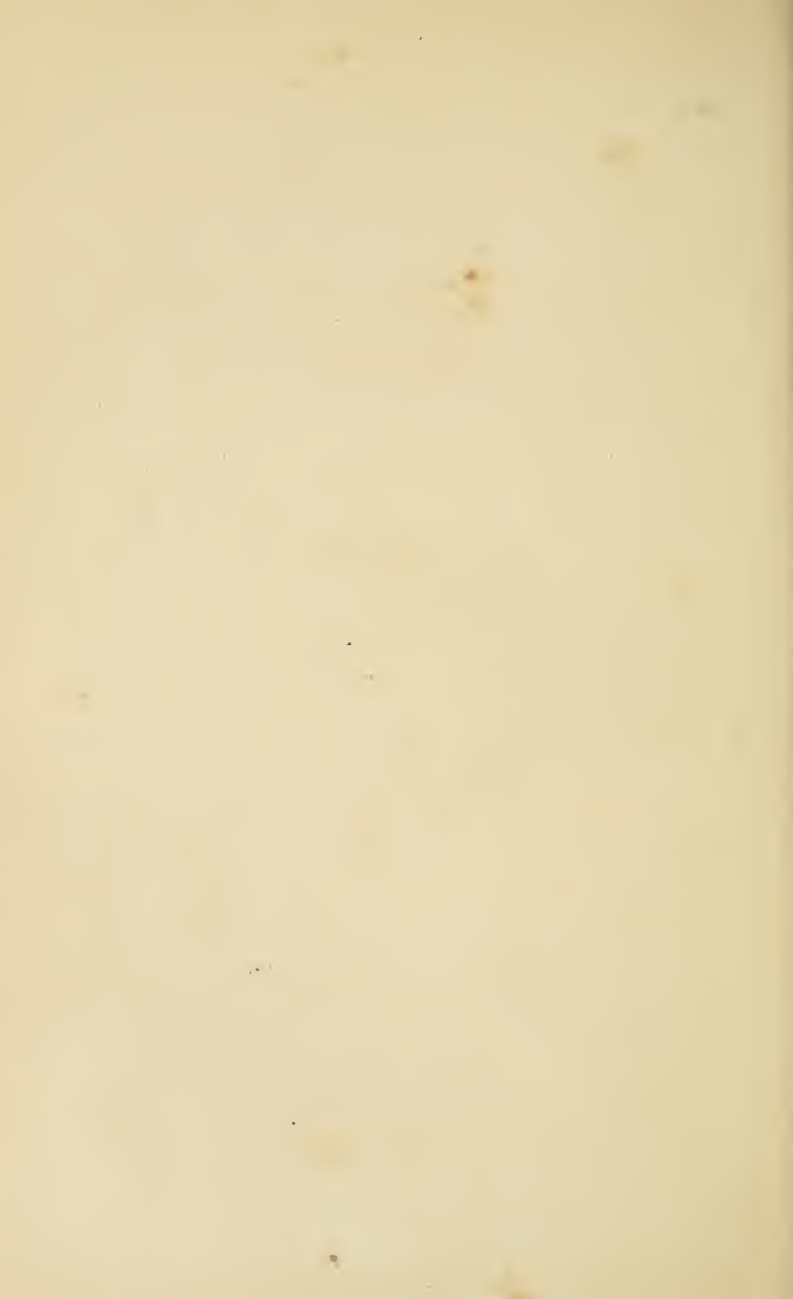
ILLUSTRATIONS TO VOL. II.

“AFTER HE'D KNOCKED HIM DOWN, HARRY
INVITED THAT CHAP TO STAND UP AND
HAVE IT OUT” *Frontispiece*

‘THE AUDACITY OF THE LITTLE MAN EX-
CITED ANGELA’S CURIOSITY. . . . *To face p. 122*

‘IN THE FULL ENJOYMENT OF THE INTOXI-
CATION PRODUCED BY HIS MORNING
PIPE’ „ „ 254

‘HE BECKONED HER, WITHOUT A WORD, TO
RISE’ „ „ 288



ALL SORTS AND CONDITIONS OF MEN.

CHAPTER XV.

A SPLENDID OFFER.

It was a strange coincidence that only two days after this conversation with Miss Kennedy, Harry received his first offer of employment.

2 It came from the Brewery, and was in the first instance a mere note sent by a clerk, inviting 'H. Goslett' to call at the Accountant's Office at ten in the morning. The name, standing bare and naked by itself, without any preliminary title of respect, Mister, Master, or Sieur, presented, Harry thought, a very miserable appearance. Perhaps it would be difficult to find a readier method of insulting a man than to hurl his own name at his head. One may understand how Louis Capet

must have felt when thus reduced to a plain simplicity.

‘What on earth,’ Harry asked, forgetting his trade, ‘can they want with me?’

In business houses, working men, even of the gentle craft of cabinet-making, generally carry with them tools, sometimes wear an apron, always have their trousers turned up, and never wear a collar—using, instead, a red muffler, which keeps the throat warmer, and does not so readily show the effects of London fog and smoke. Also some of their garments are sometimes made of corduroy, and their jackets have bulging pockets, and their hats not unfrequently have a pipe stuck in them. This young working man repaired to the trysting-place in the easy attire in which he was wont to roam about the bowers of the East End. That is to say, he looked like a carelessly dressed gentleman.

Harry found, at the office, his uncle, Mr. Bunker, who snorted when he saw his nephew.

‘What are you doing here?’ he asked. ‘Can’t you waste your time and bring disgrace

on a hard-working uncle outside the place where he is known and respected?’

Harry sighed.

‘Few of us,’ he said, ‘sufficiently respect their uncles. And with *such* an uncle—ah!’

What more might have passed between them, I know not. Fortunately, at this point, they were summoned to the presence of the Chief Accountant.

He knew Mr. Bunker and shook hands with him.

‘Is this your nephew, Mr. Bunker?’ he asked, looking curiously at the very handsome young fellow who stood before him with a careless air.

‘Yes, he’s my nephew; at least, he says so,’ said Mr. Bunker surlily. ‘Perhaps, sir, you wouldn’t mind telling him what you want, and letting him go. Then we can get to business.’

‘My business is with both of you.’

‘Both of us?’ Mr. Bunker looked uneasy. What business could that be in which he was connected with his nephew?

‘Perhaps I had better read a portion of a

letter received by me yesterday from Miss Messenger. That portion which concerns you, Mr. Bunker, is as follows.'

Rather a remarkable letter had been received at the Brewery on the previous day from Miss Messenger. It was remarkable, and, indeed, disquieting, because it showed a disposition to interfere in the management of the Great Concern, and the interference of a young lady in the Brewery boded ill.

The Chief Brewer and the Chief Accountant read it together. They were a grave and elderly pair, both in their sixties, who had been regarded by the late Mr. Messenger as mere boys. For he was in the eighties.

'Yes,' said the Chief Brewer, as his colleague read the missive with a sigh, 'I know what you would say. It is not the thing itself; the thing is a small thing; the man may even be worth his pay; but it is the spirit of the letter, the spirit, that concerns me.'

'It is the spirit,' echoed the Chief Accountant.

'Either,' said the Chief Brewer, 'we rule here, or we do not.'

‘Certainly,’ said the Chief Accountant, ‘and well put.’

‘If we do not,’—here the Chief Brewer rapped the middle knuckle of the back of his left-hand forefinger with the tip of his right-hand forefinger,—‘if we do not, what then?’

They gazed upon each other for a moment in great sadness, having before their eyes a hazy vision in which Miss Messenger walked through the Brewery, putting down the mighty and lowering salaries. A grateful reward for long and faithful services! At the thought of it, these two servants in their own eyes became patriarchal, as regards the length of years spent in the Brewery, and their long services loomed before them as so devoted and so faithful as to place them above the rewarding power of any salary.

The Chief Accountant was a tall old gentleman, and he stood in a commanding position on the hearth-rug, the letter in one hand and a pair of double eye-glasses in the other.

‘You will see from what I am about to read to you, Mr. Bunker,’ he began, ‘that your

services, such, as they were, to the late Mr. Messenger, will not go unrewarded.'

Very good, so far; but what had his reward to do with his nephew?

'You were a good deal with Mr. Messenger at one time, I remember, Mr. Bunker.'

'I was; a great deal.'

'Quite so—quite so; and you assisted him, I believe, with his house property and tenants, and so forth?'

'I did.' Mr. Bunker cleared his throat. 'I did, and often Mr. Messenger would talk of the reward I was to have when he was took.'

'He left you nothing, however; possibly because he forgot. You ought, therefore, to be the more grateful to Miss Messenger for remembering you; particularly as the young lady has only heard of you by some kind of chance.'

'Has she—has she—sent something?' he asked.

The Chief Accountant smiled graciously.

'She has sent a very considerable present indeed.'

‘Ah!’ Mr. Bunker’s fingers closed as if they were grappling with bank notes.

‘Is it,’ he asked in trembling accents,—‘is it a cheque?’

‘I think, Mr. Bunker, that you will like her present better than a cheque.’

‘There can be nothing better than one of Miss Messenger’s cheques,’ he replied gallantly. ‘Nothing in the world, except perhaps one that’s bigger. I suppose it’s notes, then?’

‘Listen, Mr. Bunker:—

“Considering the various services rendered to my grandfather by Mr. Bunker, with whom I believe you are acquainted, in connection with his property in Stepney and the neighbourhood, I am anxious to make him some substantial present. I have therefore caused inquiries to be made as to the best way of doing this. I learn that he has a nephew named Henry Goslett, by trade a cabinet-maker,”’ here Mr. Bunker made violent efforts to suppress emotion, “who is out of employment. I propose that he should be received into the Brewery, that a shop with all that he wants should be fitted up for him, and that he

attend daily until anything better offers, to do all that may be required in his trade. I should wish him to be independent as regards time of attendance, and that he should be paid at the proper rate for piece-work. In this way, I hope Mr. Bunker may feel that he has received a reward more appropriate to the friendly relations which seem to have existed between my grandfather and himself than a mere matter of money ; and I am glad to be able to gratify him in finding honourable employment for one who is, I trust, a deserving young man."

'Then, Mr. Bunker, there is this——why, good heavens ! man, what is the matter ?'

For Mr. Bunker was purple with wrath. Three times he essayed to speak, three times he failed. Then he put on his hat and fled precipitately.

'What is the matter with him ?' asked the Chief Accountant.

The young workman laughed.

'I believe,' he replied, 'that my uncle expected the cheque.'

'Well, well !' the Chief Accountant waved his hand. 'There is nothing more to be said,

You will find your shop; one of the porters will take you to it; you will have all the broken things that used to be sent out, kept for you to mend, and—and—all that. What we want a cabinet-maker for in the Brewery, I do not understand. That will do. Stay—you seem a rather superior kind of workman.'

'I have had an education,' said Harry, blushing.

'Good; so long as it has not made you discontented. Remember that we want sober and steady men in this place, and good work.'

'I am not certain yet,' said Harry, 'that I shall be able to take the place.'

'Not take the place? Not take a place in Messenger's Brewery? Do you know that everybody who conducts himself well here is booked for life? Do you know what you are throwing away? Not take the place? Why, you may be cabinet-maker for the Brewery till they actually pension you off.'

'I am—I am a little uncertain in my designs for the future. I must ask for a day to consider.'

'Take a day. If, to-morrow, you do not

present yourself in the workshop prepared for you, I shall tell Miss Messenger that you have refused her offer.'

Harry walked away with a quickened pulse. So far he had been posturing only as a cabinet-maker. At the outset he had no intention of doing more than posture for a while, and then go back to civilised life with no more difference than that caused by the revelation of his parentage. As for doing work, or taking a wage, that was very, very far from his mind. Yet now he must either accept the place, with the pay, or he must stand confessed a humbug. There remained but one other way, which was a worse way than the other two. He might, that is to say, refuse the work without assigning any reason. He would then appear in the character of a lazy and worthless workman—an idle apprentice, indeed; one who would do no work while there was money in the locker for another day of sloth. With what face would he stand before Miss Kennedy, revealed in these—his true colours?

It was an excellent opportunity for flight. That occurred to him. But flight!—and after

that last talk with the woman whose voice, whose face, whose graciousness had so filled his head and inflamed his imagination.

He walked away, considering.

When a man is very much perplexed, he often does a great many little odd things. Thus, Harry began by looking into the office where his cousin sat.

Josephus's desk was in the warmest part of the room, near the fire—so much promotion he had received. He sat among half-a-dozen lads of seventeen or twenty years of age, who did the mechanical work of making entries in the books. This he did too, and had done every day for forty years. Beside him stood a great iron safe where the books were put away at night. The door was open. Harry looked in, caught the eye of his cousin, nodded encouragingly, and went on his way, his hands in his pockets.

When he came to Mr. Bormalack's, he went in there too, and found Lord Davenant anxiously waiting for the conduct of the Case to be resumed, in order that he might put up his feet and take his morning nap.

‘This is my last morning,’ Harry said. ‘As for your Case, old boy, it is as complete as I can make it, and we had better send it in as soon as we can, unless you can find any more evidence.’

‘No—no,’ said his lordship, who found this familiarity a relief after the stately enjoyment of the title, ‘there will be no more evidence. Well, if there’s nothing more to be done, Mr. Goslett, I think I will’—here he lifted his feet—‘and if you see Clara Martha, tell her that—that—’

Here he fell asleep.

It was against the rules to visit the Dress-makers’ Association in the morning or afternoon. Harry therefore went to the room where he had fitted his lathe, and began to occupy himself with the beautiful cabinet he was making for Miss Kennedy. But he was restless: he was on the eve of a very important step. To take a place; to be actually paid for piece-work; is, if you please, a very different thing from pretending to have a trade.

Was he prepared to give up the life of culture?

He sat down and thought what such a surrender would mean.

First, there would be no club: none of the pleasant dinners at the little tables with one or two of his own friends: no easy chair in the smoking-room for a wet afternoon: none of the talk with the men who are actually in the ring—political, literary, artistic, and dramatic: none of the pleasant consciousness that you are behind the scenes, which is enjoyed by so many young fellows who belong to good clubs. The club in itself would be a great thing to surrender.

Next, there would be no society.

He was at that age when society means the presence of beautiful girls: therefore, he loved society, whether in the form of a dance, or a dinner, or an at-home, or an afternoon, or a garden party, or any other gathering where young people meet and exchange those ideas which they fondly imagine to be original. Well, he must never think any more of society. That was closed to him.

Next, he must give up most of the accomplishments, graces, arts, and skill which he had

acquired by dint of great assiduity and much practice. Billiards, at which he could hold his own against most; fencing, at which he was capable of becoming a professor; shooting, in which he was ready to challenge any American; riding; the talking of different languages; what would it help him now to be a master in these arts? They must all go; for the future he would have to work nine hours a day for tenpence an hour, which is two pounds a week, allowing for Saturday afternoon. There would simply be no time for practising any single one of these things, even if he could afford the purchase of the instruments required.

Again: he would have to grieve and disappoint the kindest man in the whole world—Lord Jocelyn.

I think it speaks well for this young man that one thing did not trouble him—the question of eating and drinking. He would dine no more; working men do not dine; they stoke. He would drink no more wine: well, Harry always considered beer a most excellent and delicious beverage, particularly when you get it unadulterated.

Could he give up all these things? He did not conceive it possible, you see, that a man should go and become a workman, receiving a wage and obeying orders, and afterwards resume his old place among gentlemen, as if nothing had happened. Indeed, it would require a vast amount of explanation.

Then he began to consider what he would get if he remained.

One thing only would reward him. He was so far gone in love, that for this girl's sake he would renounce everything and become a workman indeed.

He could not work: the quiet of the room oppressed him: he must be up and moving while this struggle went on.

Then he thought of his uncle Bunker and laughed, remembering his discomfiture and wrath. While he was laughing the door opened, and the very man appeared.

He had lost his purple hue, and was now, in fact, rather pale, and his cheeks looked flabby.

‘Nephew,’ he said huskily, ‘I want to talk to you about this thing; give over sniggerin’, and talk serious now.’

‘Let us be serious.’

‘This is a most dreadful mistake of Miss Messenger’s: you know at first I thought it must be a joke. That was why I went away; men of my age and respectability don’t like jokes. But it was no joke. I see now it is just a mere dreadful mistake, which you can set right.’

‘How can I set it right?’

‘To be sure, I could do it myself, very easily. I have only got to write to her, and tell her that you’ve got no character, and nobody knows if you know your trade.’

‘I don’t think that would do, because I might write as well——’

‘The best plan would be for you to refuse the situation and go away again. Look here, boy: you come from no one knows where; you live no one knows how; you don’t do any work—my impression is, you don’t want any; and you’ve only come to see what you can borrow or steal. That’s my opinion. Now, don’t let’s argue, but just listen. If you’ll go away quietly, without any fuss, just telling them at the Brewery that you’ve got to go, I’ll give

you—yes—I'll give you—twenty pounds down! There!'

'Very liberal indeed! But I am afraid——'

'I'll make it twenty-five. A man of spirit can do anything with twenty-five pounds down. Why, he might go to the other end of the world. If I were you I'd go there. Large openings there for a lad of spirit—large openings! Twenty-five pounds down, on the nail.'

'It seems a generous offer, still——'

'Nothing,' Mr. Bunker went on, 'has gone well since you came. There's this dreadful mistake of Miss Messenger's; then that Miss Kennedy's job. I didn't make anything out of that compared with what I might, and there's the——' He stopped because he was thinking of the houses.

'I *want* you to go,' he added, almost plaintively.

'And that, very much, is one of the reasons why I want to stay. Because, you see, you have not yet answered a question of mine. What did you get for me when you traded me away?'

For the second time his question produced a very remarkable effect upon the good man.

When he had gone, slamming the door behind him, Harry smiled sweetly.

‘I know,’ he said, ‘that he has done “something,” as they call it. Bunker is afraid. And I—yes—I shall find it out and terrify him still more. But, in order to find it out, I must stay. And if I stay, I must be a workman. And wear an apron! And a brown-paper cap! No. I draw the line above aprons. No consideration shall induce me to wear an apron. Not even—no—not if she were to make the apron a condition of marriage.’

CHAPTER XVI.

HARRY'S DECISION.

HE spent the afternoon wandering about the streets of Stepney, full of the new thought that here might be his future home. This reflection made him regard the place from quite a novel point of view. As a mere outsider, he had looked upon the place critically, with amusement, with pity, with horror (in rainy weather), with wonder (in sunshiny days). He was a spectator, while before his eyes were played as many little comedies, comediettas, or tragedies, or melodramas as there were inhabitants. But no farces, he remarked, and no burlesques. The life of industry contains no elements of farce or of burlesque. But if he took this decisive step he would have to look upon the East End from an inside point of view; he would be himself one of the actors, he would

play his own little comedy. Therefore he must introduce the emotion of sympathy, and suppress the critical attitude altogether.

There was once an Earl who went away and became a sailor before the mast; he seems to have enjoyed sailing better than legislating, but was, by accident, ingloriously drowned while so engaged. There was also the Honourable Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, who was also supposed to be drowned, but in reality exercised until his death, and apparently with happiness, the craft of wheelwright. There was another unfortunate nobleman, well known to fame, who became a butcher in a colony, and liked it. Precedents enough of voluntary descent and eclipse, to say nothing of the involuntary obscurations, as when an *émigré* had to teach dancing, or the son of a Royal Duke was fain to become a village schoolmaster. These historical parallels pleased Harry's fancy until he recollected that he was himself only a son of the people and not of noble descent, so that they really did not bear upon his case, and he could find not one single precedent in the whole of history parallel with himself.

‘Mine,’ he said, formulating the thing, ‘is a very remarkable and unusual case. Here is a man brought up to believe himself of gentle birth, and educated as a gentleman, so that there is nothing in the most liberal training of a gentleman that he has not learned, and no accomplishment which becomes a gentleman that he has not acquired. Then he learns that he is not a gentleman by birth, and that he is a pauper ; wherefore, why not honest work ? Work is noble, to be sure, especially if you get the kind of work you like, and please yourself about the time of doing it ; nothing could be a more noble spectacle than that of myself working at a lathe for nothing, in the old days ; would it be quite as noble at the Brewery, doing piece-work ? ’

These reflections, this putting of the case to himself, this grand dubiety, occupied the whole afternoon. When the evening came, and it was time for him to present himself in the drawing-room, he was no further advanced towards a decision.

The room looked bright and restful ; wherever Angela went, she was accompanied and

surrounded by an atmosphere of refinement. Those who conversed with her became infected with her culture ; therefore, the place was like any drawing-room at the West End, save for the furniture, which was simple. Ladies would have noticed, even in such little things, in the way in which the girls sat and carried themselves, a note of difference. To Harry these minutiae were unknown, and he saw only a room-full of girls quietly happy and apparently well-bred : some were reading ; some were talking ; one or two were ‘ making ’ something for themselves, though their busy fingers had been at work all day. Nelly and Miss Kennedy were listening to the Captain, who was telling a yarn of his old East Indiaman. The three made a pretty group, Miss Kennedy seated on a low stool at the Captain’s knee, while the old man leaned forward in his arm-chair, his daughter beside him watching, in her affectionate and pretty way, the face of her patron.

The quiet, peaceful air of the room, the happy and contented faces which before had been so harassed and worn, struck the young man’s

heart. Part of this had been his doing ; could he go away and leave the brave girl who headed the little enterprise to the tender mercies of a Bunker ? The thought of what he was throwing up—the club life, the art life, the literary life, the holiday time, the delightful roving in foreign lands which he should enjoy no more—all seemed insignificant considered beside this haven of rest and peace in the troubled waters of the East End. He was no philanthropist ; the cant of platforms was intolerable to him ; yet he was thinking of a step which meant giving up of his own happiness for that of others : with, of course, the constant society of the woman he loved. Without that compensation the sacrifice would be impossible.

Miss Kennedy looked up and nodded to him kindly, motioning him not to interrupt the story, which the Captain presently finished.

Then they had a little music and a little playing, and there was a little dancing—all just as usual ; a quiet, pleasant evening ; and they went away.

‘You are silent to-night, Mr. Goslett,’

said Angela, as they took their customary walk in the quiet little garden called Stepney Green.

‘Yes. I am like the parrot; I think the more.’

‘What is in your mind?’

‘This: I have had an offer—an offer of work—from the Brewery. Miss Messenger herself sent the offer, which I am to accept, or to refuse, to-morrow morning.’

‘An offer of work? I congratulate you. Of course you will accept?’ She looked at him sharply, even suspiciously.

‘I do not know.’

‘You have forgotten,’ she said—in other girls the words and the tone of her voice would have sounded like an encouragement—‘you have forgotten what you said only last Sunday evening.’

‘No, I have not forgotten. What I said last Sunday evening only increases my embarrassment. I did not expect then—I did not think it possible that any work here would be offered to me.’

‘Is the pay insufficient?’

‘No; the pay is to be at the usual market rate.’

‘Are the hours too long?’

‘I am to please myself. It seems as if the young lady had done her best to make me as independent as a man who works for money can be.’

‘Yet you hesitate. Why?’

He was silent; thinking what he should tell her. The whole truth would have been best; but then, one so seldom tells the whole truth about anything, far less about oneself. He could not tell her that he had been masquerading all the time, after so many protestations of being a real working man.

‘Is it that you do not like to make friends among the East End workmen?’

‘No.’ He could answer this with truth. ‘It is not that. The working men here are better than I expected to find them. They are more sensible, more self-reliant, and less dangerous. To be sure, they profess to entertain an unreasoning dislike for rich people, and, I believe, think that their lives are entirely spent over oranges and skittles. I wish they had

more knowledge of books, and could be got to think in some elemental fashion about Art. I wish they had a better sense of beauty, and I wish they could be persuaded to cultivate some of the graces of life. You shall teach them, Miss Kennedy. Also, I wish that tobacco was not their only solace. I am very much interested in them. That is not the reason.'

'If you please to tell me—' she said.

'Well, then'—he would tell that fatal half-truth,—'the reason is this: you know that I have had an education above what Fortune intended for me when she made me the son of Sergeant Goslett.'

'I know,' she replied. 'It was my case as well; we are companions in this great happiness.'

'The man who conferred this benefit upon me, the best and kindest-hearted man in the world, to whom I am indebted for more than I can tell you, is willing to do more for me. If I please, I may live with him, in idleness.'

'You may live in idleness? That must be indeed a tempting offer!'

'Idleness,' he replied, a little hurt at her

contempt for what certainly was a temptation for him, 'does not always mean doing nothing.'

'What would you do, then?'

'There is the life of culture and art——'

'Oh, no!' she replied. 'Would you really like to become one of those poor creatures who think they lead lives devoted to art? Would you like to grow silly over blue china, to quarrel about colour, to worship Form in poetry, to judge everything by the narrow rules of the latest pedantic fashion?'

'You know this art world, then?'

'I know something of it, I have heard of it. Never mind me, think of yourself. You would not, you could not, condemn yourself to such a life.'

'Not to such a life as you picture. But, consider, I am offered a life of freedom instead of servitude.'

'Servitude! Why, we are all servants one of the other. Society is like the human body, in which all the limbs belong to each other. There must be rich and poor, idlers and workers; we depend one upon the other; if the rich do not work with and for the poor,

retribution falls upon them. The poor must work for the rich, or they will starve ; poor or rich, I think it is better to be poor ; idler or worker, I know it is better to be worker.'

He thought of Lord Jocelyn : of the pleasant chambers in Piccadilly : of the club : of his own friends : of society : of little dinners : of stalls at the theatre : of suppers among actors and actresses : of artists and their smoking parties : of the men who write, and the men who talk, and the men who know everybody, and are full of stories : of his riding, and hunting, and shooting : of his fencing, and billiards, and cards.

All these things passed through his brain swiftly, in a moment. And then he thought of the beautiful woman beside him, whose voice was the sweetest music to him that he had ever heard.

'You must take the offer,' she went on, and her words fell upon his ear like the words of an oracle to a Greek in doubt. 'Work at the Brewery is not hard. You will have no taskmaster set over you ; you are free to go and come, to choose your own time : there will

be, in so great a place there must be, work, quite enough to occupy your time. Give up yearning after an idle life, and work in patience.'

'Is there anything,' he said, 'to which you could not persuade me?'

'Oh, not for me!' she replied impatiently. 'It is for yourself. You have your life before you, to throw away or to use. Tell me—' she hesitated a little; 'you have come back to your own kith and kin, after many years. They were strange to you at first, all these people of the East End—your own people. Now that you know them, should you like to go away from them, altogether away, and forget them? Could you desert them? You know, if you go, that you will desert them, for between this end of London and the other there is a great gulf fixed, across which no one ever passes. You will leave us altogether if you leave us now.'

At this point Harry felt the very strongest desire to make it clear that what concerned him most would be the leaving her, but he repressed the temptation, and merely remarked

that if he did desert his kith and kin, they would not regret him. His uncle Bunker, he explained, had even offered him five-and-twenty pounds to go.

‘It is not that you have done anything, you know, except to help us in our little experiment,’ said Angela. ‘But it is what you may do, what you shall do, if you remain.’

‘What can I do?’

‘You have knowledge: you have a voice: you have a quick eye and a ready tongue: you could lead, you could preside. Oh, what a career you might have before you!’

‘You think too well of me, Miss Kennedy. I am a very lazy and worthless kind of man.’

‘No.’ She shook her head and smiled. ‘I know you better than you know yourself. I have watched you for these months. And then, we must not forget, there is our Palace of Delight.’

‘Are we millionaires?’

‘Why, we have already begun it. There is our drawing-room; it is only a few weeks old, yet see what a difference there is already.’

The girls are happy; their finer tastes are awakened; their natural yearnings after things delightful are partly satisfied; they laugh and sing now; they run about and play. There is already something of our dream realised. Stay with us, and we shall see the rest.'

He made an effort and again restrained himself.

'I stay, then,' he said, 'for your sake—because you command me to stay.'

Had she done well? She asked herself the question in the shelter of her bedroom, with great doubt and anxiety. This young workman, who might if he chose be a—well, yes—a gentleman—quite as good a gentleman as most of the men who pretend to the title—was going to give up whatever prospects he had in the world, at her bidding, and for her sake. For her sake! Yet, what he wished was impossible.

What reward, then, had she to offer him that would satisfy him? Nothing. Stay, he was only a man. One pretty face was as good as another; he was struck with hers for the moment. She would put him in the way of

being attracted by another. Yes ; that would do. This settled in her own mind, she put the matter aside, and, as she was very sleepy, she only murmured to herself, as her eyes closed, ‘Nelly Sorensen.’

CHAPTER XVII.

WHAT LORD JOCELYN THOUGHT.

THE subject of Angela's meditations was not where she thought him, in his own bedroom. When he left his adviser, he did not go in at once, but walked once or twice up and down the pavement, thinking. What he had promised to do was nothing less than to reverse, altogether, the whole of his promised life; and this is no light matter, even if you do it for love's sweet sake. And Miss Kennedy, being no longer with him, he felt a little chilled from the first enthusiasm. Presently he looked at his watch: it was still early; only half-past ten.

‘There is the chance,’ he said. ‘It is only a chance. He generally comes back somewhere about this time.’

There are no cabs at Stepney, but there

are tramways which go quite as fast, and, besides, give one the opportunity of exchanging ideas on current topics with one's travelling companions. Harry jumped into one, and sat down between a bibulous old gentleman, who said he lived in Fore Street, but had for the moment mislaid all his other ideas, and a lady who talked to herself as she carried a bundle. She was rehearsing something dramatic, a monologue, in which she was 'giving it' to somebody unknown. And she was so much under the influence and emotion of imagination, that the young man trembled lest he might be mistaken for the person addressed. However, happily, the lady so far restrained herself, and Aldgate was reached in peace. There he took a hansom and drove to Piccadilly.

The streets looked strange to him after his three months' absence; the lights, the crowds on the pavements, so different from the East End crowd; the rush of the carriages and cabs taking the people home from the theatre, filled him with a strange longing. He had been asleep; he had had a dream; there was no

Stepney ; there was no Whitechapel Road : a strange and wondrous dream. Miss Kennedy and her damsels were only part of this vision. A beautiful and delightful dream. He was back again in Piccadilly, and all was exactly as it always had been.

So far all was exactly the same, for Lord Jocelyn was in his chamber, and alone.

‘You are come back to me, Harry?’ he said, holding the young man’s hand ; ‘you have had enough of your cousins and the worthy Bunker. Sit down, boy. I heard your foot on the stairs. I have waited for it a long time. Sit down and let me look at you. To-morrow you shall tell me all your adventures.’

‘It is comfortable,’ said Harry, taking his old chair and one of his guardian’s cigarettes. ‘Yes, Piccadilly is better, in some respects, than Whitechapel.’

‘And there is more comfort the higher up you climb, eh?’

‘Certainly, more comfort. There is not, I am sure, such an easy chair as this east of St. Paul’s.’

Then they were silent, as becomes two men

who know what is in each other's heart, and wait for it to be said.

'You look well,' said Harry presently. 'Where did you spend the summer?'

'Mediterranean. Yacht. Partridges.'

'Of course. Do you stay in London long?'

And so on. Playing with the talk, and postponing the inevitable, Harry learned where everybody had been, and who was engaged, and who was married, and how one or two had joined the majority since his departure. He also heard the latest scandal, and the current talk, and what had been done at the Club, and who had been black-balled, with divers small bits of information about people and things. And he took up the talk in the old manner, and fell into the old attitude of mind quite naturally, and as if there had been no break at all. Presently the clock pointed to one, and Lord Jocelyn rose.

'We will talk again to-morrow, Harry my boy, and the day after to-morrow, and many days after that. I am glad to have you back again.' He laid his hand upon the young man's shoulder.

‘Do not go just yet,’ said Harry, blushing and feeling guilty, because he was going to inflict pain on one who loved him. ‘I cannot talk with you to-morrow.’

‘Why not?’

‘Because—sit down again and listen—because I have made up my mind to join my kith and kin altogether, and stay among them.’

‘What? Stay among them?’

‘You remember what you told me of your motive in taking me. You would bring up a boy of the people like a gentleman. You would educate him in all that a gentleman can learn, and then you would send him back to his friends, whom he would make discontented, and so open the way for civilisation.’

‘I said so—did I? Yes; but there were other things, Harry. You forget that motives are always mixed. There was affection for my brave sergeant and a desire to help his son; there were all sorts of things. Besides, I expected that you would take a rough kind of polish only—like nickel, you know, or pewter—and you turned out real silver. A gentleman, I thought, is born, not made. This proved

a mistake. The puddle blood would show, I expected: which was prejudice, you see, because there is no such thing as puddle blood. Besides, I thought you would be stupid and slow to pick up ideas, and that you would pick up only a few; supposing in my ignorance, that all persons not "born," as the Germans say, must be stupid and slow.'

'And I was not stupid?'

'You? The brightest and cleverest lad in the whole world—you stepped into the place I made for you as if you had been born for it. Now tell me why you wish to step out of it.'

'Like you, sir, I have many motives. Partly, I am greatly interested in my own people: partly, I am interested in the place itself and its ways; partly, I am told, and I believe, that there is a great deal which I can do there—do not laugh at me.'

'I am not laughing, Harry; I am only astonished. Yes, you *are* changed: your eyes are different, your voice is different. Go on, my boy.'

'I do not think there is much to say—I mean, in explanation. But of course I under-

stand—it is a part of the thing—that if I stay among them I must be independent. I could no longer look to your bounty, which I have accepted too long. I must work for my living.’

‘Work? And what will you do?’

‘I know a lot of things, but somehow they are not wanted at Stepney, and the only thing by which I can make money seems to be my lathe—I have become a cabinet-maker.’

‘Heavens! You have become a cabinet-maker? Do you actually mean, Harry, that you are going to work—with your hands—for money?’

‘Yes; with my hands. I shall be paid for my work; I shall live by my work. The puddle blood, you see.’

‘No, no,’ said Lord Jocelyn, ‘there is no proof of puddle blood in being independent. But think of the discomfort of it.’

‘I have thought of the discomfort. It is not really so very bad. What is your idea of the life I shall have to live?’

‘Why,’ said Lord Jocelyn, with a shudder, ‘you will rise at six; you will go out in working clothes, carrying your tools, and with your

apron tied round and tucked up like a missionary bishop, on his way to a confirmation. You will find yourself in a workshop full of disagreeable people, who pick out unpleasant adjectives and tack them on to everything, and whose views of life and habits are—well, not your own. You will have to smoke pipes at a street corner on Sundays; your tobacco will be bad; you will drink bad beer—Harry! the contemplation of the thing is too painful.’

Harry laughed.

‘The reality is not quite so bad,’ he said. ‘Cabinet-makers are excellent fellows. And as for myself, I shall not work in a shop, but alone. I am offered the post of cabinet-maker in a great place where I shall have my own room to myself, and can please my own convenience as to my hours. I shall earn about tenpence an hour, say seven shillings a day, if I keep at it.’

‘If he keeps at it,’ murmured Lord Jocelyn, ‘he will make seven shillings a day.’

‘Dinner in the middle of the day, of course,’ Harry went on, with a cheerful smile. ‘At the East End everybody stokes at one. We

have tea at five and supper when we can get it. A simpler life than yours.'

'This is a programme of such extreme misery,' said Lord Jocelyn, 'that your explanations are quite insufficient. Is there, I wonder, a woman in the case?'

Harry blushed violently.

'There *is* a woman, then?' said his guardian triumphantly. 'There always is. I might have guessed it from the beginning. Come, Harry, tell me all about it. Is it serious? Is she—can she be—at Whitechapel—a lady?'

'Yes,' said Harry, 'it is quite true. There is a woman, and I am in love with her. She is a dressmaker.'

'Oh!'

'And a lady.'

Lord Jocelyn said nothing.

'A lady,' Harry repeated the words, to show that he knew what he was saying. 'But it is no use. She won't listen to me.'

'That is more remarkable than your two last statements. Many men have fallen in love with dressmakers; some dressmakers have acquired partially the manners of a lady; but

that any dressmaker should refuse the honourable attentions of a handsome young fellow like you, and a gentleman, is inconceivable.'

'A cabinet-maker, not a gentleman. But do not let us talk of her, if you please.'

Then Lord Jocelyn proceeded, with such eloquence as was at his command, to draw a picture of what he was throwing away compared with what he was accepting. There was a universal feeling, he assured his ward, of sympathy with him; everybody felt that it was rough on such a man as himself to find that he was not of illustrious descent; he would take his old place in society, all his old friends would welcome him back among them, with much more to the same purpose.

It was four o'clock in the morning when their conversation ended, and Lord Jocelyn went to bed sorrowful, promising to renew his arguments in the morning. As soon as he was gone, Harry went to his own room and put together a few little trifles belonging to the past which he thought he should like. Then he wrote a letter of farewell to his guardian, promising to report himself from time to time, with

a few words of gratitude and affection. And then he stole quietly down the stairs and found himself in the open street. Like a school-boy, he had run away.

There was nobody left in the streets. Half-past four in the morning is almost the quietest time of any ; even the burglar has gone home, and it is too early for anything but the market-garden carts on their way to Covent Garden. He strode down Piccadilly and across the silent Leicester Square into the Strand. He passed through that remarkable thoroughfare, and, by way of Fleet Street, where even the newspaper offices were deserted, the leader-writers and the editor and the sub-editors all gone home to bed, to St. Paul's. It was then a little after five, and there was already a stir. An occasional foot-fall along the principal streets. By the time he got to the Whitechapel Road there were a good many up and about, and before he reached Stepney Green the day's work was beginning. The night had gone and the sun was rising, for it was six o'clock and a cloudless morning. At ten he presented himself once more at the accountant's office.

‘Well?’ asked the Chief.

‘I am come,’ said Harry, ‘to accept Miss Messenger’s offer.’

‘You seem pretty independent. However, that is the way with you working men nowadays. I suppose you don’t even pretend to feel any gratitude?’

‘I don’t pretend,’ said Harry pretty hotly, ‘to answer questions outside the work I have to do.’

The Chief looked at him as if he could, if he wished, and was not a Christian, annihilate him.

‘Go, young man,’ he said presently, pointing to the door, ‘go to your work. Rudeness to his betters a working man considers due to himself, I suppose. Go to your work.’

Harry obeyed without a word, being in such a rage that he could not speak. When he reached his workshop, he found waiting to be mended an office-stool with a broken leg. I regret to report that this unhappy stool immediately became a stool with four broken legs and a kicked-out seat.

Harry was for the moment too strong for the furniture.

Not even the thought of Miss Kennedy's approbation could bring him comfort. He was an artisan, he worked by the piece, that was nothing. The galling thing was to realise that he must now behave to certain classes with a semblance of respect, because now he had his 'betters.'

The day before, he was a gentleman who had no 'betters.' He was enriched by this addition to his possessions, and yet he was not grateful.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE PALACE OF DELIGHT.

THERE lies on the west and south-west of Stepney Green a triangular district, consisting of an irregular four-sided figure—what Euclid beautifully calls a trapezium—formed by the Whitechapel Road, the Commercial Road, Stepney Green and High Street, or Jamaica Street, or Jubilee Street, whichever you please to call your frontier. This favoured spot exhibits in perfection all the leading features which characterise the great Joyless City. It is, in fact, the heart of the East End. Its streets are mean and without individuality or beauty; at no season and under no conditions can they ever be picturesque; one can tell, without inquiring, that the lives led in those houses are all after the same model, and that the inhabitants have no pleasures. Everything

that goes to make a city, except the means of amusement, is to be found here. There are churches and chapels—do not the blackened ruins of Whitechapel Church stand here? There are superior ‘seminaries’ and ‘academies,’ names which linger here to show where the yearning after the genteel survives; there is a Board School, there is the great London Hospital, there are almshouses, there are even squares in it—Sidney Square and Bedford Square, to wit—but there are no gardens, avenues, theatres, art galleries, libraries, or any kind of amusement whatever.

The leading thoroughfare of this quarter is named Oxford Street, which runs nearly all the way from the New Road to Stepney Church. It begins well with some breadth, a church and a few trees on one side, and almshouses with a few trees on the other. This promise is not kept; it immediately narrows and becomes like the streets which branch out of it, a double row of little two-storied houses, all alike. Apparently they are all furnished alike; in each ground-floor front there are the red curtains and the white blind of respectability, with the

little table bearing something, either a basket of artificial flowers, or a big Bible, or a vase, or a case of stuffed birds from foreign parts, to mark the gentility of the family. A little farther on, the houses begin to have small balconies on the first floor, and are even more genteel. The streets which run off north and south are like unto it but meaner. Now, the really sad thing about this district is that the residents are not the starving class, or the vicious class, or the drinking class; they are a well-to-do and thriving people, yet they desire no happiness, they do not feel the lack of joy, they live in meanness and are contented therewith. So that it is emphatically a representative quarter and a type of the East End generally, which is for the most part respectable and wholly dull, and perfectly contented never to know what pleasant strolling and resting-places, what delightful interests, what varied occupation, what sweet diversions there are in life.

As for the people, they follow a great variety of trades. There are 'travelling drapers' in abundance; it is, in fact, the chosen *quartier*

of that romantic following; there are a good many stevedores, which betrays the neighbourhood of docks; there are some who follow the mysterious calling of herbalist, and I believe you could here still buy the materials for those now forgotten delicacies, saloop and tansy pudding. You can, at least, purchase medicines for any disease under the sun if you know the right herbalist to go to. One of them is a medium as well; and if you call on him, you may be entertained by the artless prattle of the ‘sperruts,’ of whom he knows one or two. They call themselves all sorts of names—such as Peter, Paul, Shakespeare, Napoleon, and Byron—but in reality there are only two of them, and they are bad actors. Then there are cork-cutters, ‘wine-merchants’ engineers’—it seems rather a grand thing for a wine merchant, above all other men, to want an engineer; novelists do not want engineers—sealing-wax manufacturers, workers in shellac and zinc, sign-painters, heraldic painters, coopers, makers of combs, iron-hoops, and sun-blinds, pewterers, feather-makers—they only pretend to make feathers; what they really do

is to buy them, or to pluck the birds, and then arrange the feathers and trim them ; but they do not really make them—ship-modellers, a small but haughty race ; mat-dealers, who never pass a prison without using bad language, for reasons which many who have enjoyed the comforts of a prison will doubtless understand. There are also a large quantity of people who call themselves teachers of music. This may be taken as mere pride and ostentatious pretence, because no one wants to learn music in this country, no one ever plays any music, no one has a desire to hear any. If any one called and asked for terms of tuition, he would be courteously invited to go away, or the professor would be engaged, or he would be out of town. In the same way, a late learned professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge was reported always to have important business in the country if an Arab came to visit the colleges. But what a lift above the stevedores, pewterers, and feather pretenders to be a professor of music !

Angela would plant her Palace in this region, the most fitting place, because the most

dreary; because here there exists nothing, absolutely nothing, for the imagination to feed upon. It is, in fact, though this is not generally known, the purgatory prepared for those who have given themselves up too much to the enjoyment of roses and rapture while living at the West End. How beautiful are all the designs of Nature! Could there be, anywhere in the world, a more fitting place for such a purgatory than such a city? Besides, once one understands the thing, one is further enabled to explain why these grim and sombre streets remain without improvement. To beautify them would seem, in the eyes of pious and religious people, almost a flying in the face of Providence. And yet, not really so; for it may be argued that there are other places equally fitted for the punishment of these purgatorial souls—for instance, Hoxton, Bethnal Green, Battersea, and the Isle of Dogs.

Angela resolved, therefore, that on this spot the Palace of Joy should stand. There should be, for all who chose to accept it, a general and standing invitation to accept happiness and create new forms of delight. She would

awaken in dull and lethargic brains a new sense, the sense of pleasure; she would give them a craving for things of which as yet they knew nothing. She would place within their reach, at no cost whatever, absolutely free for all, the same enjoyments as are purchased by the rich. A beautiful dream. They should cultivate a noble discontent; they should gradually learn to be critical; they should import into their own homes the spirit of discontent; they should cease to look on life as a daily uprising and a down-sitting, a daily mechanical toil, a daily rest. To cultivate the sense of pleasure is to civilise. With the majority of mankind the sense is undeveloped, and is chiefly confined to eating and drinking. To teach the people how the capacity of delight may be widened, how it may be taught to throw out branches in all manner of unsuspected directions, was Angela's ambition. A very beautiful dream.

She owned so many houses in this district that it was quite easy to find a place suitable for her purpose. She discovered upon the map of her property a whole four-square block of

small houses, all her own, bounded north, south, east, and west by streets of other small houses, similar and similarly situated. This site was about five minutes west of Stepney Green, and in the district already described. The houses were occupied by weekly tenants, who would find no difficulty in getting quarters as eligible elsewhere. Some of them were in bad repair; and what with maintenance of roofs and chimneys, bad debts, midnight flittings, and other causes, there was little or no income derived from these houses. Mr. Messenger, indeed, who was a hard man, but not unjust, only kept them to save them from the small owner like Mr. Bunker, whose necessities and greed made him a rack-rent landlord.

Having fixed upon her site, Angela next proceeded to have interviews—but not on the spot, where she might be recognised—with lawyers and architects, and to unfold partially her design. The area on which the houses stood formed a pretty large plot of ground, ample for her purpose, provided that the most was made of the space and nothing wasted. But a great deal was required; therefore she

would have no lordly staircases covering half the ground, nor great ante-rooms, nor handsome lobbies. Everything, she carefully explained, was to be constructed for use and not for show. She wanted, to begin with, three large halls : one of them was to be a dancing-room, but it might also be a children's play-room for wet weather : one was to be used for a permanent exhibition of native talent, in painting, drawing, wood and ivory carving, sculpture, leather work and the like, everything being for sale at low prices ; the last was to be a library, reading and writing-room. There was also to be a theatre, which would serve as a concert and music-room, and was to have an organ in it. In addition to these there were to be a great number of class-rooms for the various arts, accomplishments, and graces that were to be taught by competent professors and lecturers. There were to be other rooms where tired people might find rest, quiet, and talk—the women with tea and work, the men with tobacco. And there were to be billiard-rooms, a tennis-court, a racquet-court, a fives-court, and a card-room. In fact, there was to

be space found for almost every kind of recreation.

She did not explain to her architect how she proposed to use this magnificent place of entertainment ; it was enough that he should design it and carry out her ideas : and she stipulated that no curious inquirers on the spot should be told for what purpose the building was destined, nor who was the builder.

One cannot get designs for a palace in a week : it was already late in the autumn, after Harry had taken up his appointment, and was busy among the legs of stools, that the houses began to be pulled down and the remnants carted away. Angela pressed on the work : but it seemed a long and tedious delay before the foundations were laid and the walls began slowly to rise.

There should have been a great Function when the foundation-stone was laid, with a procession of the clergy in white surplices and college caps, perhaps a bishop, Miss Messenger herself, with her friends, a lord or two, the officers of the nearest Masonic Lodge, a few Foresters, Odd Fellows, Ancient Buffaloes, Druids and

Shepherds, a flag, the charity children, a dozen policemen, and Venetian masts, with a prayer, a hymn, a speech, and a breakfast—nothing short of this should have satisfied the founder. Yet she let the opportunity slip, and nothing was done at all; the great building, destined to change the character of the Gloomy City into a City of Sunshine, was begun with no pomp or outward demonstration. Gangs of workmen cleared away the ignoble bricks; the little tenements vanished; a broad space bristling with little garden walls gaped where they had stood; then the walls vanished; and nothing at all was left but holes where cellars had been; then they raised a hoarding round the whole, and began to dig out the foundation. After the hoarding was put up, nothing more, for a long time was visible. Angela used to prowl round it in the morning, when her girls were all at work, but fearful lest the architect might come and recognise her.

As she saw her Palace begin to grow into existence, she became anxious about its success. The first beatific vision, the rapture of imagination, was over, and would come no more; she

had now to face the hard fact of an unsympathetic people who perhaps would not desire any pleasure—or if any, then the pleasure of a ‘spree’ with plenty of beer. How could the thing be worked if the people themselves would not work it? How many could she reckon upon as her friends? Perhaps two or three at most. Oh! the Herculean task, for one woman, with two or three disciples, to revolutionise the City of East London!

With this upon her mind, her conversations with the intelligent young cabinet-maker became more than usually grave and earnest. He was himself more serious than of old, because he now occupied so responsible a position in the Brewery. Their relations remained unchanged. They walked together, they talked and they devised things for the drawing-room, and especially for Saturday evenings.

‘I think,’ he said, one evening when they were alone except for Nelly in the drawing-room, ‘I think that we should never think or talk of working men in the lump, any more than we think of rich men in a lump. All

sorts and conditions of men are pretty much alike, and what moves one moves all. We are all tempted in the same way; we can all be led in the same way.'

'Yes, but I do not see how that fact helps.'

They were talking, as Angela loved to do, of the scheme of the Palace.

'If the Palace were built, we should offer the people of Stepney, without prejudice to Whitechapel, Mile End, Bow, or even Cable Street, a great many things which at present they cannot get and do not desire. Yet they have always proved extremely attractive. We offer the society of the young for the young, with dancing, singing, music, acting, entertainments—everything except, which is an enormous exception, feasting: we offer them all for nothing; we tell them, in fact, to do everything for themselves: to be the actors, singers, dancers, and musicians.'

'And they cannot do anything.'

'A few can; the rest will come in. You forget, Miss Kennedy, the honour and glory of acting, singing, and performing in public. Can

there be a greater reward than the applause of one's friends ?'

'It could never be so nice,' said Nelly, 'to dance in a great hall among a lot of people as to dance up here, all by ourselves.'

The Palace was not, in these days, very greatly in the young man's mind. He was occupied with other things : his own work and position ; the wisdom of his choice : the prospects of the future. For surely, if he had exchanged the old life and got nothing in return but work at a lathe all day at tenpence an hour, the change was a bad one. Nothing more had been said to him by Miss Kennedy about the great things he was to do, with her, for her, among his people. Was he, then, supposed to find out for himself these great things ? And he made no more way with his wooing. That was stopped, apparently, altogether.

Always kind to him ; always well pleased to see him ; always receiving him with the same sweet and gracious smile ; always frank and open with him ; but nothing more.

Of late he had observed that her mind was greatly occupied ; she was brooding over some-

thing ; he feared that it might be something to do with the Associated Dressmakers' financial position. She did not communicate her anxieties to him, but always, when they were alone, wanted to go back to their vision of the Palace. Harry possessed a ready sympathy ; he fell easily and at once into the direction suggested by another's words. Therefore, when Angela talked about the Palace, he too took up the thread of invention, and made believe with her as if it were a thing possible, a thing of brick and mortar.

'I see,' he went on this evening, warming to the work, 'I see the opening day, long announced, of the Palace. The halls are furnished and lit up ; the dancing-room is ready ; the theatre is completed, and the electric lights are lit ; the concert-rooms are ready with their music-stands and their seats. The doors are open. Then a wonderful thing happens.'

'What is that ? ' asked Angela.

'Nobody comes.'

'Oh ! '

'The vast chambers echo with the footsteps

of yourself, Miss Kennedy, and of Nelly who makes no more noise than a demure kitten. Captain Sorensen and I make as much tramping as we can, to produce the effect of a crowd. But it hardly seems to succeed. Then come the girls, and we try to get up a dance; but, as Nelly says, it is not quite the same as your drawing-room. Presently two men, with pipes in their mouths, come in and look about them. I explain that the stage is ready for them, if they like to act; or the concert-room, if they will sing; or the dancing-room, should they wish to shake a leg. They stare and they go away. Then we shut up the doors and go away and cry.'

'Oh, Mr. Goslett, have you no other comfort for me?'

'Plenty of comfort. While we are all crying, somebody has a happy thought. I think it is Nelly.'

She blushed a pretty rosy red. 'I am sure I could never suggest anything.'

'Nelly suggests that we shall offer prizes, a quantity of prizes, for competition in everything, the audience or the spectators to be

judges; and then the Palace will be filled and the universal reign of joy will begin.'

'Can we afford prizes?' asked Angela, the practical.

'Miss Kennedy,' said Harry severely, 'permit me to remind you that, in carrying out this project, money, for the first time in the world's history, is to be of no value.'

If Newnham does not teach women to originate—which a thousand Newnhams will never do—it teaches them to catch at an idea and develop it. The young workman suggested her Palace; but his first rough idea was a poor thing compared with Angela's finished structure—a wigwam beside a castle, a tabernacle beside a cathedral. Angela was devising an experiment, the like of which has never yet been tried upon restless and dissatisfied mankind. She was going, in short, to say to them: 'Life is full, crammed full, overflowing with all kinds of delights. It is a mistake to suppose that only rich people can enjoy these things. They may buy them, but everybody may create them; they cost nothing. You shall learn music, and forthwith all the world will be

transformed for you ; you shall learn to paint, to carve, to model, to design, and the day shall be too short to contain the happiness you will get out of it. You shall learn to dance, and know the rapture of the waltz. You shall learn the great art of acting, and give each other the pleasure which rich men buy. You shall even learn the great art of writing, and learn the magic of a charmed phrase. All these things which make the life of rich people happy shall be yours ; and they *shall cost you nothing*. What the heart of man can desire shall be yours ; *and for nothing*. I will give you a house to shelter you, and rooms in which to play ; you have only to find the rest. Enter in, my friends ; forget the squalid past ; here are great halls and lovely corridors—they are yours. Fill them with sweet echoes of dropping music ; let the walls be covered with your works of art ; let the girls laugh and the boys be happy within these walls. I give you the shell, the empty carcase ; fill it with the Spirit of Content and Happiness.’

Would they, to begin with, ‘behave according’ ? It was easy to bring together half a

dozen dressmakers : girls always like behaving nicely ; would the young men be equally amenable ? And would the policeman be inevitable, as in the corridors of a theatre ? The police, however, would have to be voluntary, like every other part of the Institution, and the guardians of the peace must, like the performers in the entertainments, give their services for nothing. For which end, Harry suggested, it would be highly convenient to have a professor of the noble art of self-defence, with others of fencing, single-stick, quarter-staff, and other kindred objects.

CHAPTER XIX.

DICK THE RADICAL.

IN the early days of winter, the walls of the palace being now already well above the hoarding, Angela made another important convert. This was no other than Dick Coppin, the cousin of whom mention has been already made.

‘I will bring him to your drawing-room,’ said Harry. ‘That is, if he will come. He does not know much about drawing-rooms, but he is a great man at the Stepney Advanced Club. He is the reddest of red-hot Rads, and the most advanced of Republicans. I do not think he would himself go a-murdering of kings and priests, but I fancy he regards these things as accidents naturally rising out of a pardonable enthusiasm. His manners are better than you will generally find, because he belongs to my own gentle craft. You shall tame him, Miss Kennedy.’

Angela said she would try.

‘He shall learn to waltz,’ Harry went on. ‘This will convert him from a fierce Republican to a merely enthusiastic Radical. Then he shall learn to sing in parts: this will drop him down into advanced Liberalism. And if you can persuade him to attend your evenings, talk with the girls, or engage in some Art, say painting, he will become, quite naturally, a mere Conservative.’

With some difficulty, Harry persuaded his cousin to come with him. Dick Coppin was not, he said of himself, a dangler after girls’ apron-strings, having something else to think of; nor was he attracted by the promise, held out by his cousin, of music and singing. But he came under protest, because music seemed to him an idle thing while the House of Lords remained undestroyed, and because this cousin of his could somehow make him do pretty nearly what he pleased.

He was a man of Harry’s own age; a short man, with somewhat rough and rugged features—strong, and not without the beauty of strength. His forehead was broad: he had

thick eyebrows, the thick lips of one who speaks much in public, and a straight chin—the chin of obstinacy. His eyes were bright and full: his hair was black: his face was oval: his expression was masterful: it was altogether the face of a man who interested one. Angela thought of his brother, the Captain in the Salvation Army: this man, she felt, had all the courage of the other, with more common-sense; yet one who, too, might become a fanatic, who might be dangerous if he took the wrong side. She shook hands with him and welcomed him. Then she said that she wanted dancing men for her evenings, and hoped that he could dance. It was the first time in his life that Mr. Coppin had been asked that question, and also the first time that he had thought it possible that any man in his senses, except a sailor, should be expected to dance. Of course he could not, and said so bluntly, sticking his thumbs in his waistcoat pockets, which is a gesture peculiar to the trade, if you care to notice so small a fact.

‘Your cousin,’ said Angela, ‘will teach you. Mr. Goslett, please give Mr. Coppin a lesson in

a quadrille. Nelly, you will be his partner. Now, if you will make up the set, I will play.'

An elderly bishop of Calvinistic principles could not have been more astonished than was this young workman. He had not the presence of mind to refuse. Before he realised his position, he was standing beside his partner: in front of him stood his cousin, also with a partner: four girls made up the set. Then the music began, and he was dragged, pushed, hustled, and pulled this way and that. He would have resented this treatment but that the girls took such pains to set him right, and evidently regarded the lesson as one of the greatest importance. Nor did they cease until he had discerned what the mathematician called the Law of the Quadrille, and could tread the measure with some approach to accuracy.

'We shall not be satisfied, Mr. Coppin,' said Angela, when the Quadrille was finished, 'until we have taught everybody to dance.'

'What is the good of dancing?' he asked good-humouredly, but a good deal humiliated by the struggle.

'Dancing is graceful: dancing is a good

exercise ; dancing should be natural to young people : dancing is delightful. See—I will play a waltz ; now watch the girls.’

She played. Instantly the girls caught each other by the waist and whirled round the room with brightened eyes and parted lips. Harry took Nelly in the close embrace which accompanies the German dance, and swiftly, easily, gracefully, danced round and round the room.

‘Is it not happiness that you are witnessing, Mr. Coppin?’ asked Angela. ‘Tell me, did you ever see dressmakers happy before? You, too, shall learn to waltz. I will teach you, but not to-night.’

Then they left off dancing and sat down, talking and laughing. Harry took his violin and discoursed sweet music, to which they listened or not as they listed. Only the girl who was lame looked on with rapt and eager face.

‘See her!’ said Angela, pointing her out. ‘She has found what her soul was ignorantly desiring. She has found music. Tell me, Mr. Coppin, if it were not for the music and this room, what would that poor child be?’

He made no reply. Never before had he witnessed, never had he suspected, such an evening. There were the girls whom he despised, who laughed and jested with the lads in the street, who talked loud and were foolish. Why, they were changed. What did it mean? And who was this young woman, who looked and spoke as no other woman he had ever met, yet was only a dressmaker?

‘I have heard of you, Mr. Coppin,’ this young person said, in her queen-like manner, ‘and I am glad that you have come. We shall expect you, now, every Saturday evening. I hear that you are a political student.’

‘I am a Republican,’ he replied. ‘That’s about what I am.’ Again he stuck his thumbs into his waistcoat pockets.

‘Yes. You do not perhaps quite understand what it is that we are doing here, do you? In a small way—it is quite a little thing—it may interest even a political student like yourself. The interests of milliners and dress-makers are very small compared with the House of Lords. Still — your sisters and cousins——’

‘It seems pleasant,’ he replied, ‘if you don’t all get set up with high notions. As for me, I am for root-and-branch Reform, I am.’

‘Yes : but all improvement in Government means improvement of the people, does it not? Else, I see no reason for trying to improve a Government.’

He made no reply. He was so much accustomed to the vague denunciations and cheap rhetoric of his class, that a small practical point was strange to him.

‘Now,’ said Angela, ‘I asked your cousin to bring you here, because I learn that you are a man of great mental activity, and likely, if you are properly directed, to be of great use to us.’

He stared again. Who was this dress-maker who spoke about directing him? The same uncomfortable feeling came over him, a cold doubt about himself, which he often felt when in the society of his cousin. No man likes to feel that he is not perfectly and entirely right, and that he must be right.

‘We are a society,’ she went on, ‘of girls who want to work for ourselves : we all of us

belong to your class; we therefore look to you for sympathy and assistance. Yet you hold aloof from us. We have had some support here already, but none from the people who ought most to sympathise with us. That is, I suppose, because you know nothing about us. Very well, then. While your cousin is amusing those girls, I will tell you about our Association.'

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'Now you understand, Mr. Coppin. You men have long since organised yourselves—it is our turn now; and we look to you for help. We are not going to work any longer for a master: we are not going to work long hours any longer: and we are going to get time every day for fresh air, exercise, and amusement. You are continually occupied, I believe, at your Club, in denouncing the pleasures of the rich. But we are actually going to enjoy all those pleasures ourselves, and they will cost us nothing. Look round this room—we have a piano lent to us: there is your cousin with his fiddle, and Captain Sorensen with his: we are learning part-songs, which cost us three-

halfpence each : we dance : we play : we read —a subscription to Smith's is only three guineas a year : we have games which are cheap : the whole expense of our evenings is the fire in winter and the gas. On Saturday evenings we have some cake and lemonade, which one of the girls makes for us. What can rich people have more than society, lights, music, singing, and dancing ?'

He was silent, wondering at this thing.

'Don't you see, Mr. Coppin, that if we are successful we shall be the cause of many more such Associations? Don't you see, that if we could get our principle established, we should accomplish a greater revolution than the overthrow of the Lords and the Church, and one far more beneficial?'

'You can't succeed,' he said. 'It's been tried before.'

'Yes : by men : I know it. And it has always broken down because the leaders were false to their principles and betrayed the cause.'

'Where are the girls to get money to start with?'

‘We are fortunate,’ Angela replied. ‘We have this house and furniture given to us by a lady interested in us. That, I own, is a great thing. But other rich people will be found to do as much. Why, how much better it is than leaving money to hospitals!’

‘Rich people!’ he echoed with contempt.

‘Yes: rich people, of whom you know so little, Mr. Coppin, that I think you ought to be very careful how you speak of them. But think of us, look at the girls. Do they not look happier than they used to look?’

He replied untruthfully, because he was not going to give in to a woman all of a sudden, that he did not remember how they used to look, but that undoubtedly they now looked very well. He did not say—which he felt—that they were behaving more quietly and modestly than he had ever known them to behave.

‘You,’ Angela went on, with a little emphasis on the pronoun, which made her speech a delicate flattery,—‘you, Mr. Coppin, cannot fail to observe how the evening’s relaxation helps to raise the whole tone of the girls. The

music which they hear sinks into their hearts and lifts them above the little cares of their lives: the dancing makes them merry: the social life, the talk among ourselves, the books they read, all help to maintain a pure and elevated tone of thought—I declare, Mr. Copping, I no longer know these girls. And then they bring their friends, and so their influence spreads. They will not, I hope, remain in the work-rooms all their lives. A woman should be married, do not you think so, Mr. Copping?’

He was too much astonished at the whole conversation to make any coherent reply.

‘I think you have perhaps turned your attention too much to politics, have you not? Yet practical questions ought to interest you.’

‘They say, at the Club,’ he answered, ‘that this place is a sham and a humbug.’

‘Will you bring your friends here to show them that it is not?’

‘Harry stood up for you the other night. He’s plucky, and they like him for all he looks a swell.’

‘Does he speak at your Club?’

‘Sometimes—not to say speak. He gets

up after the speech, and says so and so is wrong. Yet they like him—because he isn't afraid to say what he thinks. They call him "Gentleman Jack."'

'I thought he was a brave man,' said Angela, looking at Harry, who was rehearsing some story to the delight of Nelly and the girls.

'Yes—the other night they were talking about you, and one said one thing, and one said another, and a chap said he thought he'd seen you in a West End music-hall, and he didn't believe you were any better than you should be.'

'Oh!' She shrank as if she had been struck some blow.

'He didn't say it twice. After he'd knocked him down, Harry invited that chap to stand up and have it out. But he wouldn't.'

It was a great misfortune for Harry that he lost the soft and glowing look of gratitude and admiration which was quite wasted upon him. For he was at the very point, the critical point, of the story.

Angela had made another convert. When

Dick Coppin went home that night, he was humbled but pensive. Here was a thing of which he had never thought—and here was a woman the like of whom he had never imagined. The House of Lords, the Church, the Land Laws, presented no attraction that night for his thoughts. For the first time in his life, he felt the influence of a woman.

CHAPTER XX.

DOWN ON THEIR LUCK.

ENGAGED in these pursuits, neither Angela nor Harry paid much heed to the circle at the Boarding House, where they were still nominally boarders. For Angela was all day long at her Association, and her general assistant, or Prime Minister, after a hasty breakfast, hastened to his daily labour. He found that he was left entirely to his own devices ; work came in which he did or left undone, Miss Messenger's instructions were faithfully carried out, and his independence was respected. During work time he planned amusements and surprises for Miss Kennedy and her girls, or he meditated upon the Monotony of Man, a subject which I may possibly explain later on ; or when he knocked off, he would go and see the draymen roll about the heavy casks as if they were foot-

balls: or he would watch the machinery and look at the great brown mass of beiling hops, or he would drop suddenly upon his cousin Josephus, and observe him faithfully entering names, ticking off and comparing, just as he had done for forty years, still a Junior Clerk. But he gave no thought to the Boarders.

One evening, however, in late September, he happened to look in towards nine o'clock, the hour when the frugal supper was generally spread. The usual occupants of the room were there, but there was no supper on the table, and the landlady was absent.

Harry stood in the doorway, with his hands in his pockets, carelessly looking at the group. Suddenly he became aware, with a curious sinking of heart, that something was gone wrong with all of them. They were all silent, all sitting bolt upright, no one taking the least notice of his neighbour, and all apparently in some physical pain.

The illustrious Pair were in their usual places, but his lordship, instead of looking sleepy and sleepily content, as was his custom, at the evening hour, sat bolt upright and

thrummed the arm of his chair with his fingers, restless and ill at ease; opposite to him sat his consort, her hands tightly clasped, her bright beady eyes gleaming with impatience, which might at any moment break out into wrath. Yet the Case was completely drawn up, as Harry knew, because he had finished it himself, and it only remained to make a clean copy before it was 'sent in' to the Lord Chancellor.

As for the Professor, he was seated at the window, his legs curled under the chair, looking moodily across Stepney Green—into space, and neglecting his experiments. His generally cheerful face wore an anxious expression, as if he was thinking of something unpleasant, which would force itself upon his attention.

Josephus was in his corner, without his pipe, and more than usually melancholy. His sadness always, however, increased in the evening, so that he hardly counted.

Daniel, frowning like a Rhine Baron of the good old time, had his books before him, but they were closed. It was a bad sign that even the Version in the Hebrew had no attraction for him.

Mr. Maliphant alone was smiling. His smiles, in such an assemblage of melancholy faces, produced an incongruous effect. The atmosphere was charged with gloom: it was funereal: in the midst of it the gay and cheerful countenance, albeit wrinkled, of the old man, beamed like the sun impertinently shining amid fog and rain, sleet and snow. The thing was absurd. Harry felt the force of Miss Kennedy's remark that the occupants of the room reminded her of a fortuitous concourse of flies, or of ants, or rooks, or people in an omnibus, each of whom was profoundly occupied with its own affairs and careless of its neighbours. Out of six in the room, five were unhappy: they did not ask for, or expect, the sympathies of their neighbours: they did not reveal their anxieties: they sat and suffered in silence: the sixth alone was quite cheerful: it was nothing to him what experiences the rest were having, whether they were enjoying the sweetness of the upper airs, or enduring hardness. He sat in his own place near the Professor: he laughed aloud: he even talked and told stories, to which no one listened. When

Harry appeared, he was just ending a story which he had never begun.

‘So it was given to the other fellow. And he came from Baxter Street, close to the City Hall, which is generally allowed to be the wickedest street in New York City.’

He paused a little, laughed cheerfully, rubbed his dry old hands together, smoked his pipe in silence, and then concluded his story, having filled up the middle in his own mind, without speech.

‘And so he took to the coasting trade off the Andes.’

Harry caught the eye of the Professor, and beckoned him to come outside.

‘Now,’ he said, taking his arm, ‘what the devil is the matter with all of you?’

The Professor smiled feebly under the gas lamp in the street, and instantly relapsed into his anxious expression.

‘I suppose,’ he said, ‘that is, I guess, because they haven’t told me, that it’s the same with them as with me.’

‘And that is——?’

The Professor slapped his empty pockets.

‘Want of cash,’ he said. ‘I’m used to it in the autumn, just before the engagements begin. Bless you! It’s nothing to me. Though, when you’ve had no dinner for a week, you do begin to feel as if you could murder and roast a cat, if no one was looking. I’ve even begun to wish that the Eighth Commandment was suspended during the autumn.’

‘Do you mean, man, that you are all hungry?’

‘All except old Maliphant, and he doesn’t count. Josephus had some dinner yesterday, but he says he can’t afford supper and dinner too at the rate his heels wear out. Yes, I don’t suppose there’s been a dinner a-piece among us for the last week.’

‘Good Heavens!’ Harry hurried off to find the landlady.

She was in the kitchen sitting before the fire, though it was a warm night. She looked up when her lodger entered, and Harry observed that she, too, wore an air of dejection.

‘Well, Mrs. Bormalack?’

She groaned and wiped away a tear.

‘My heart bleeds for them, Mr. Goslett,’

she said. 'I can't bear to set eyes on them : I can't face them. Because to do what I should like to do for them, would be nothing short of ruin. And how to send them away I cannot tell.'

He nodded his head encouragingly.

'You are a young man, Mr. Goslett, and you don't consider—and you are thinking day and night of that sweet young thing, Miss Kennedy. And she of you. Oh ! you needn't blush : a handsome young fellow like you is a prize for any woman, however good-looking. Besides, I've got eyes.'

'Still, that does not help us much to the point, Mrs. Bormalack, which is, what can we do for them ?'

'Oh, dear me ! the poor things don't board and lodge any more, Mr. Goslett. They've had no board to-day. If I did what I should like to do—but I can't. There's the rent and rates and all. And how I can keep them in the house, unless they pay their rent, I can't tell. I've never been so miserable since Captain Saffrey went away, owing for three months.'

'Not enough to eat ?'

‘Lady Davenant came to me this morning, and paid the rent for this week, but *not the board*: said that her nephew Nathaniel hadn’t sent the six dollars, and they could only have breakfast, and must find some cheap place for dinner somewhere else. In the middle of the day they went out. Her ladyship put quite a chirpy face upon it: said they were going into the city to get dinner, but his lordship groaned. Dinner! They came home at two, and his groans have been heartrending all the afternoon. I never heard such groaning.’

‘Poor old man!’

‘And there’s the Professor, too. It’s low water with him. No one wants conjuring till winter comes. But he’s quite used to go without his dinner. You needn’t mind him!’

‘Eels,’ said Harry, ‘are used to being skinned. Yet they wriggle a bit.’

He produced a few coins and proffered a certain request to the landlady. Then he returned to his fellow-lodgers.

Presently there was heard in the direction of the kitchen a cheerful hissing, followed by a perfectly divine fragrance. Daniel closed his

eyes, and leaned back in his chair. The Professor smiled. His lordship rolled in his chair and groaned. Presently Mrs. Bormalack appeared, and the cloth was laid. His lordship showed signs of an increasing agitation. The fragrance increased. He leaned forward clutching the arm of his chair, looking to his wife as if for help and guidance at this most difficult crisis. He was frightfully hungry: all his dinner had been a biscuit and a half, his wife having taken the other half. What is a biscuit and a half to one accustomed to the flesh-pots of Canaan City?

‘Clara Martha,’ he groaned, trying to whisper, but failing in his agitation, ‘I must have some of that beefsteak or I shall——’

Here he relapsed into silence again.

It was not from a desire to watch the sufferings of the unlucky Peer, or in order to laugh at them, that Harry hesitated to invite him. Now, however, he hesitated no longer.

‘I am giving a little supper to-night, Lady Davenant, to—to—celebrate my birthday. May I hope that you and his lordship will join us?’

Her ladyship most affably accepted.

Well: they were fed; they made up for the meagreness of the midday meal by such a supper as should be chronicled, so large, so generous was it. Such a supper, said the Professor, as should carry a man along for a week, were it not for the foolish habit of getting hungry twice at least in the four-and-twenty hours. After supper they all became cheerful, and presently went to bed as happy as if there were no to-morrow, and the next day's dinner was assured.

When they were gone, Harry began to smoke his evening pipe. Then he became aware of the presence of the two who were left—his cousin Josephus and old Mr. Maliphant.

The former was sitting in gloomy silence, and the latter was making as if he would say something, but thought better of it, and smiled instead.

‘Josephus,’ said Harry, ‘what the devil makes you so gloomy? You can’t be hungry still?’

‘No,’ he replied. ‘It isn’t that: a junior clerk fifty-five years old has no right to get hungry.’

‘What is it, then?’

‘They talk of changes in the office, that is all. Some of the juniors will be promoted; not me, of course; and some will have to go. After forty years in the Brewery, I shall have to go. That’s all.’

‘Seems rough, doesn’t it? Can’t you borrow a handful of malt, and set up a little Brewery for yourself?’

‘It is only starvation. After all, it doesn’t matter—nobody cares what happens to a junior clerk. There are plenty more. And the work-house is said to be well managed. Perhaps they will let me keep their accounts.’

‘When do you think—the—the reduction will be made?’

‘Next month, they say.’

‘Come, cheer up, old man,’ said his cousin. ‘Why, if they do turn you out—which would be a burning shame—you can find something better.’

‘No,’ replied Josephus sadly, ‘I know my place. I am a junior clerk. They can be got to do my work at seven bob a week. Ah! in thousands.’

‘ Well, but can’t you do anything else ? ’

‘ Nothing else.’

‘ In all these years, man, have you learned nothing at all ? ’

‘ Nothing at all.’

Is there, thought Harry, gazing upon his luckless cousin, a condition more miserable than that of the cheap clerk ? In early life he learns to spell, to read, to write, and perhaps to keep books, but this only if he is ambitious. Here his education ends : he has no desire to learn anything more : he falls into whatever place he can get, and then he begins a life in which there is no hope of preferment and no endeavour after better things. There are, in every civilised country, thousands and thousands of these helpless and hopeless creatures : they mostly suffer in silence, being at the best ill-fed and ill-paid : but they sometimes utter a feeble moan, when one of them can be found with vitality enough, about their pay and prospects : no one has yet told them the honest truth, that they are already paid as much as they deserve : that their miserable accomplishments cannot for a moment be compared with

the skill of an artisan : that they are self-condemned because they make no effort. They have not even the energy to make a Union : they have not the sense of self-protection : they are content, if they are not hungry, if they have tobacco to smoke and beer to drink.

‘How long is it since you—did—whatever it was you did, that kept you down?’ asked the younger man, at length.

‘I did nothing. It was an accident. Unless,’ added Josephus with a smile,—‘unless it was the Devil. But devils don’t care to meddle with junior clerks.’

‘What was the accident, then?’

‘It was one day in June ; I remember the day, quite well. I was alone in my office, the same office as I am in still. The others, younger than myself, and I was then twenty-one, were gone off on business. The safe stood close to my desk. There was a bundle of papers in it sealed up, and marked “Mr. Messenger, Private,” which had been there a goodish while, so that I suppose they were not important : some of the books were there as well, and Mr. Messenger himself had sent

down, only an hour before . . . before . . . it happened, a packet of notes to be paid into the bank. The money had been brought in by our country collectors—fourteen thousand pounds, in country bank-notes. Now remember, I was sitting at the desk and the safe was locked, and the keys were in the desk, and no one was in the office except me. And I will swear that the notes were in the safe. I told Mr. Messenger that I would take my oath to it, and I would still.’ Josephus grew almost animated as he approached the important point in his history.

‘Well?’

‘Things being so—remember, no one but me in the office, and the keys——’

‘I remember. Get along.’

‘I was sent for.’

‘By Mr. Messenger?’

‘Mr. Messenger didn’t send for junior clerks. He used to send for the Heads of Departments, who sent for the chief clerks who ordered the juniors. That was the way in those days. No, I was sent for to the chief clerk’s office and given a packet of letters for copying. That

took three minutes. When I came back the office was still empty, the safe was locked and the keys in my desk.'

'Well?'

'Well—but the safe was empty!'

'What! all the money gone?'

'All gone, every farthing—with Mr. Messenger's private papers.'

'What a strange thing!'

'No one saw anybody going into the office or coming out. Nothing else was taken.'

'Come—with 14,000*l.* in his hand, no reasonable thief would ask for more.'

'And what is more extraordinary still, not one of those notes has ever since been presented for payment.'

'And then, I suppose, there was a row.'

Josephus assented.

'First, I was to be sacked at once; then I was to be watched and searched; next, I was to be kept on until the notes were presented and the thief caught. I have been kept on, the notes have not been presented; and I've had the same pay, neither more nor less, all the time. That's all the story. Now, there's

to be an end of that. I'm to be sent away.'

Mr. Maliphan had not been listening to the story at all, being pleasantly occupied with his own reminiscences. At this point one of them made him laugh and rub his hands.

'When Mr. Messenger's father married Susannah Coppin, I have heard——'

Here he stopped.

'Hallo!' cried Harry. 'Go on, Venerable. Why, we are cousins or nephews, or something, of Miss Messenger. Josephus, my boy, cheer up!'

Mr. Maliphan's memory now jumped over two generations, and he went on.

'Caroline Coppin married a sergeant in the army, and a handsome lad—I forget his name. But Mary Coppin married Bunker. The Coppins were a good old Whitechapel stock, as good as the Messengers. As for Bunker, he was an up-start, he was; and came from Barking, as I always understood.'

Then he was once more silent.

CHAPTER XXI.

LADY DAVENANT.

It was a frequent custom with Lady Davenant to sit with the girls in the work-room in the morning. She liked to have a place where she could talk ; she took an ex-professional interest in their occupation ; she had the eye of an artist for their interpretation of the fashion. Moreover, it pleased her to be in the company of Miss Kennedy, who was essentially a woman's woman. Men who are so unhappy as to have married a man's woman will understand perfectly what I mean. On the morning after Harry's most providential birthday, therefore, when she appeared, no one was in the least disturbed. But to-day she did not greet the girls with her accustomed stately inclination of the head, which implied that, although now a Peeress, she had been brought up to their

profession and in a Republican School of Thought, and did not set herself up above her neighbours. Yet respect to rank should be conceded, and was expected. In general, too, she was talkative, and enlivened the tedium of work with many an anecdote illustrating Canaan City and its ways, or showing the lethargic manners of the Davenants, both her husband and his father, to say nothing of the grandfather, contented with the lowly occupation of a wheelwright, while he might have soared to the British House of Lords. This morning, however, she sat down and was silent, and her head drooped. Angela, who sat next her and watched, presently observed that a tear formed in her eye and dropped upon her work, and that her lips moved as if she was holding a conversation with herself. Thereupon she arose, put her hand upon the poor lady's arm, and drew her away without a word to the solitude of the dining-room, where her ladyship gave way and burst into an agony of sobbing.

Angela stood before her saying nothing. It was best to let the fit have its way. When the

crying was nearly over, she laid her hand upon her hair and gently smoothed it.

‘Poor dear lady!’ she said. ‘Will you tell me what has happened?’

‘Everything,’ she gasped. ‘Oh! everything. The six months are gone, all but one. Nephew Nathaniel writes to say that as we haven’t even made a start, all this time, he reckons we don’t count to make any, and he’s got children, and as for business, it’s got down to the hard pan, and dollars are skurce, and we may come back again right away, and there’s the money for the voyage home whenever we like, but no more.’

‘Oh!’ said Angela, beginning to understand. ‘And . . . and your husband?’

‘There’s where the real trouble begins. I wouldn’t mind for myself, money or no money. I would write to the Queen for money. I would go to the workhouse. I would beg my bread in the street, but the Case I never would give up—never—never—never.’

She clasped her hands, dried her eyes, and sat bolt upright, the picture of unyielding determination.

‘And your husband is not, perhaps, so resolute as yourself?’

‘He says, “Clara Martha, let us go hum. As for the title, I would sell it to nephew Nathaniel, who’s the next heir, for a week of square meals; he should have the coronet, if I’d got it, for a month’s certainty of steaks and chops and huckleberry pie; and as for my seat in the House of Lords, he should have it for our old cottage in Canaan City, which is sold, and the school which I’ve given up and lost.” He says: “Pack the box, Clara Martha—there isn’t much to pack—and we will go at once. If the American minister won’t take up the Case for us, I guess that Case may slide till Nathaniel takes it up for himself.” That is what he says, Miss Kennedy. Those were his words. Oh! Oh! Oh! Mr. Feeblemind! Oh! Mr. Facing-Both-Ways!’

She wrung her hands in despair, for it seemed as if her husband would be proof against even the scorn and contempt of these epithets.

‘But what do you mean to do?’

‘I shall stay,’ she replied. ‘And so shall

he, if my name is Lady Davenant. Do you think I am going back to Canaan City to be scorned by Aurelia Tucker? Do you think I shall let that poor old man, who has his good side, Miss Kennedy—and as for virtue he is an angel, and knows not the taste of tobacco or whisky—face his nephew, and have to say what good he has done with all those dollars? No, here we stay.’ She snapped her lips, and made as if she would take root upon that very chair. ‘Shall he part with his birthright like Esau, because he is hungry? Never! The curse of Esau would rest upon us.’

‘He’s at home now,’ she went on, ‘preparing for another day without dinner; groans won’t help him now; and this time there will be no supper—unless Mr. Goslett has another birthday.’

‘Why! Good gracious! you will be starved.’

‘Better starve than go home as we came. Besides, I shall write to the Queen when there’s nothing left. When Nathaniel’s money comes, which may be to-morrow, and may be next month, I shall give a month’s rent to Mrs. Bormalack, and save the

rest for one meal a day. Yes, as long as the money lasts, he shall eat meat—once a day—at noon. He's been pampered, like all the Canaan City folk ; set up with turkey roast and turkey boiled, and ducks and beef every day, and buckwheat cakes and such. Oh ! a change of diet will bring down his luxury and increase his pride.'

Angela thought that starvation was a new way of developing pride of birth, but she did not say so.

'Is there no way,' she asked, 'in which he can earn money?'

She shook her head.

'As a teacher he was generally allowed to be learned but sleepy. In our city, however, the boys and girls didn't expect too much, and it's a sleepy place. In winter, they sit round the stove and they go to sleep ; in summer, they sit in the shade and they go to sleep. It's the sleepest place in the States. No, there's no kind o' way in which he can earn any money. And if there were, did you ever hear of a British Peer working for his daily bread?'

'But you, Lady Davenant? Surely your

ladyship would not mind—if the chance offered—if it were a thing kept secret—if not even your husband knew—would not object to earning something every week to find that square meal which your husband so naturally desires?’

Her ladyship held out her hands, without a word.

Angela, in shameful contempt of Political Economy, placed in them the work which she had in her own, and whispered :

‘ You had better,’ she said, ‘ take a week in advance. Then you can arrange with Mrs. Bormalack for the usual meals on the old terms ; and if you would rather come here to work, you can have this room to yourself all the morning. Thank you, Lady Davenant. The obligation is entirely mine, you know. For, really, more delicate work, more beautiful work, I never saw. Do all American ladies work so beautifully ? ’

Her ladyship, quite overcome with these honeyed words, took the work and made no reply.

‘ Only one thing, dear Lady Davenant,’ Angela went on, smiling. ‘ You must promise

me not to work too hard. You know that such work as yours is worth at least twice as much as mine. And then you can push on the Case, you know.'

The little lady rose, and threw her arms round Angela's neck.

'My dear!' she cried, with more tears. 'You are everybody's friend. Oh! yes, I know. And how you do it and all—I can't think, nor Mrs. Bormalack neither. But the day may come—it *shall* come—when we can show our gratitude.'

She retired, taking the work with her.

Her husband was asleep as usual, for he had had breakfast, and as yet the regular pangs of noon were not active. The Case was not spread out before him, as was usual, ever since Mr. Goslett had taken it in hand. It was ostentatiously rolled up, and laid on the table, as if packed ready for departure by the next mail.

His wife regarded him with a mixture of affection and contempt.

'He would sell the Crown of England,' she murmured, 'for roast turkey and apple fixins. The Davenants couldn't have been always like

that. It must be his mother's blood. Yet she was a Church member, and walked consistent.'

She did not wake him up, but sought out Mrs. Bormalack, and presently there was a transfer of coins and the Resurrection of Smiles and *Doux Parler*, that Fairy of Sweet Speech, who cowers and hides beneath the cold wind of poverty.

'Tell me, Mr. Goslett,' said Angela that evening, still thinking over the sad lot of the claimants; 'tell me: you have examined the claim of these people—what chance have they?'

'I should say, none whatever.'

'Then, what makes them so confident of success?'

'Hush! listen. They are not really confident. His noble lordship perfectly understands the weakness of his claim, which depends upon a pure assumption, as you shall hear. As for the little lady, his wife, she has long since jumped to the conclusion that the assumption requires no proof. Therefore, save in moments of dejection, she is pretty confident. Then, they are hopelessly ignorant of how they should proceed and of the necessary delays, even if

their Case was unanswerable. They thought they had only to cross the ocean and send in a statement in order to get admitted to the rank and privilege of the peerage. And I believe they think that the Queen will, in some mysterious way, restore the property to them.'

'Poor things!'

'Yes, it's rather sad to think of such magnificent expectations. Besides, it really is a most beautiful case. The last Lord Davenant had one son. That only son grew up, had some quarrel with his father, and sailed from the Port of Bristol bound for some American port, I forget which. Neither he nor his ship was ever heard of again. Therefore the title became extinct.'

'Well?'

'Very good. Now the story begins. His name was Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, the name always given to the eldest son of the family. Now, our friend's name is Timothy Clitheroe Davenant, and so was his father's, and so was his grandfather's.'

'That is very strange.'

'It is very strange—what is stranger still

is, that his grandfather was born, according to the date on his tomb, the same year as the lost heir, and at the same place---Davenant, where was the family seat.'

'Can there have been two of the same name born in the same place and in the same year?'

'It seems improbable, almost impossible. Moreover, the last lord had no brother, nor had his father, the second lord. I found that out at the Herald's College. Consequently, even if there were another branch, and the birth of two Timothys in the same year was certain, they would not get the title. So that their one hope is to be able to prove what they call the Connection. That is to say, the identity of the lost heir with this wheelwright.'

'That seems a very doubtful thing to do, after all these years.'

'It is absolutely impossible, unless some documents are discovered which prove it. But nothing remains of the wheelwright.'

'No book? No papers?'

'Nothing, except a small book of songs, supposed to be convivial, with his name on the inside cover, written in a sprawling hand,

and misspelt with two v's,—“Davvenant,” and above the name, in the same hand, the day of the week in which it was written, “Satturday,” with two tt's. No Christian name.'

‘Does it not seem as if the absence of the Christian name would point to the assumption of the title?’

‘Yes; they do not know this, and I have not yet told them. It is, however, a very small point, and quite insufficient in itself to establish anything.’

‘Yes,’ Angela mused. She was thinking whether something could not be done to help these poor people and settle the case decisively for them one way or the other. ‘What is to be the end of it?’

Harry shrugged his shoulders.

‘Who knows how long they can go on? When there are no more dollars, they must go home again. I hear they have got another supply of money: Mrs. Bormalack has been paid for a fortnight in advance. After that is gone—perhaps they had better go too.’

‘It seems a pity,’ said Angela, slightly reddening at mention of the money, ‘that some re-

searches could not be made, so as to throw a little light upon this strange coincidence of names.'

'We should want to know first what to look for. After that, we should have to find a man to conduct the search. And then we should have to pay him.'

'As for the man, there is the Professor: as for the place, first there is the Herald's College, and secondly, there are the parish registers of the village of Davenant; and as for the money, why, it would not cost much, and I believe something might be advanced for them. If you and I, Mr. Goslett, between us, were to pay the Professor's expenses, would he go about for us?'

She seemed to assume that he was quite ready to join her in giving his money for this object. Yet Harry was now living, having refused his guardian's proffered allowance, on his pay by the piece, which gave him, as already stated, tenpence for every working hour.

'What would the Professor cost?' she asked.

'The Professor is down upon his luck,' said Harry. 'He is so hard up at present that I believe we could get him for nothing but his

expenses. Eighteen shillings a week would buy him outright until his engagements begin again. If there were any travelling expenses, of course that would be an extra. But the village of Davenant is not a great way off. It is situated in Essex, and Essex is but a suburb of London, its original name having been East-End-seaxas, which is not generally known.'

'Very well,' she replied gravely. 'That would be only nine shillings a-piece, say eleven hours of extra work for you: and probably it would not last long, more than a week or two. Will you give two hours a day to his lordship?'

Harry made a wry face, and laughed. This young person had begun by turning him into a journeyman cabinet-maker, and was now making him work extra time. What next?

'Am I not your slave, Miss Kennedy?'

'Oh! Mr. Goslett! I thought there was to be no more nonsense of that kind. You know it can lead to nothing—even if you desired that it should.'

'Even? Miss Kennedy, can't you see——'

'No—I can see nothing—I will hear nothing. Do not—oh, Mr. Goslett—we have been

—we are—such excellent friends. You have been so great a help to me: I look to you for so much more. Do not spoil all: do not seek for what could never be: pray—pray do not.’

She spoke with so much earnestness: her eyes were filled with such a frankness: she laid her hand upon his arm with so charming a *camaraderie*, that he could not choose but obey.

‘It is truly wonderful,’ he said, thinking, for the thousandth time, how this pearl among women came to Stepney Green.

‘What is wonderful?’ she blushed as she asked.

‘You know what I mean. Let us both be frank. You command me not to say the thing I most desire to say. Very good. I will be content to wait, but under one promise——’

‘What is that?’

‘If the reason or reasons which command my silence should ever be removed—mind, I do not seek to know what they are—you will yourself——’

‘What?’ she asked, blushing sweetly.

‘You will yourself—tell me so.’

She recovered her composure and gave him her hand.

‘If, at any time, I *can* listen to you, I will tell you so. Does that content you?’

Certainly not: but there was no more to be got; therefore, Harry was fain to be contented, whether he would or not. And this was only one of a hundred little skirmishes in which he endeavoured to capture an advanced fort or prepared to lay the siege in form. And always he was routed with heavy loss.

‘And now,’ she went on, ‘we will get back to our Professor.’

‘Yes. I am to work two extra hours a day that he may go about in the luxury of eighteen shillings a week. This it is to be one of the horny-handed. What is the Professor to do first?’

‘Let us first,’ she said, ‘find him and secure his services.’

It has been seen that the Professor was already come to the period of waist-tightening, which naturally follows a too continued succession of banyan days.

He listened with avidity to any proposition

which held forth a prospect of food. The work, he said, only partly understanding it, would be difficult, but therefore the more to be desired. Common conjurers, he said, would spoil such a case. As for himself, he would undertake to do just whatever they wanted with the register, whether it was the substitution of a page or the tearing out of a page, under the very eyes of the parish clerk. 'There must be,' he said, 'a patter suitable to the occasion. I will manage that for you. I'm afraid I can't make up as I ought for the part, because it would cost too much, but we must do without that. And now, Miss Kennedy, what is it exactly that you want me to do?'

He was disappointed on learning that there would be no 'palming' of leaves, old or new, among the registers: nothing, in fact, but a simple journey and a simple examination of the books. And though, as he confessed, he had as yet no experience in the art of falsifying parish registers, where science was concerned its interests were above those of mere morality.

CHAPTER XXII.

DANIEL FAGG.

WHAT would have happened if certain things had not happened? This is a question which is seldom set in examination papers, on account of the great scope it offers to the imaginative faculty, and we all know how dangerous a thing it is to develop this side of the human mind. Many a severe historian has been spoiled by developing his imagination. But for this, Scott might have been another Alison, and Thackeray a Mill. In this Stepney business the appearance of Angela certainly worked changes at once remarkable and impossible to be dissociated from her name. Thus, but for her, the unfortunate claimants must have been driven back to their own country like baffled invaders 'rolling sullenly over the frontier.' Nelly would have spent her whole life in the

sadness of short rations and long hours, with hopeless prayers for days of fatness. Rebekah and the improvers and the dressmakers and the apprentices would have endured the like hardness. Harry would have left the Joyless City to its joylessness, and returned to the regions whose skies are all sunshine—to the young and fortunate—and its pavements all of gold. And there would have been no Palace of Delight. And what would have become of Daniel Fagg, one hardly likes to think. The unlucky Daniel had, indeed, fallen upon very evil days. There seemed to be no longer a single man left whom he could ask for a subscription to his book. He had used them all up. He had sent begging letters to every Fellow of every Scientific Society: he had levied contributions upon every Secretary: he had attacked in person every official at the Museums of Great Russell Street and South Kensington: he had tried all the publishers: he had written to every bishop, nobleman, clergyman, and philanthropist of whom he could hear, pressing upon them the claims of his great Discovery. Now he could do no

more. The subscriptions he had received for publishing his book were spent in necessary food and lodging: nobody at the Museum would even see him: he got no more answers to his letters: starvation stared him in the face.

For three days he had lived upon ninepence. Threepence a day for food. Think of that, ye who are fed regularly, and fed well. Threepence to satisfy all the cravings of an excellent appetite! There was now no more money left. And in two days more the week's rent would be due.

On the morning when he came forth, hungry and miserable, without even the penny for a loaf, it happened that Angela was standing at her upper window on the other side of the Green, and, fortunately for the unlucky scholar, she saw him. His strange behaviour made her watch him. First, he looked up and down the street in uncertainty: then, as if he had business which could not be delayed a moment, he turned to the right and marched straight away towards the Mile End Road. This was because he thought he would go to the Head of the Egyptian Department at the British Museum

and borrow five shillings. Then he stopped suddenly; this was because he remembered that he would have to send in his name, and that the Chief would certainly refuse to see him. Then he turned slowly and walked, dragging his limbs and hanging his head, in the opposite direction—because he was resolved to make for the London Docks, and drop accidentally into the sluggish green water, the first drop of which kills almost as certainly as a glass of Bourbon whisky. Then he thought that there would be some luxury in sitting down for a few moments to think comfortably over his approaching demise, and of the noise it would make in the learned world, and how remorseful and ashamed the scholars—especially he of the Egyptian Department—would feel for the short balance of their sin-laden days, and he took a seat on a bench in the Green garden with this view. As he thought he leaned forward, staring into vacancy, and in his face there grew so dark an expression of despair and terror, that Angela shuddered and ran for her hat, recollecting that she had heard of his poverty and his disappointments.

‘I am afraid you are not well, Mr. Fagg.’

He started and looked up. In imagination he was already lying dead at the bottom of the green water, and before his troubled mind there were floating confused images of his former life, now past and dead and gone. He saw himself in his Australian cottage arriving at his grand Discovery: he was lecturing about it on a platform: he was standing on the deck of a ship, drinking farewell nobblers with an enthusiastic crowd: and he was wandering hungry, neglected, despised, about the stony streets of London.

‘Well? No: I am not well,’ he replied presently, understanding things a little.

‘Is it distress of mind or of body, Mr. Fagg?’

‘Yesterday it was both; to-night it will be both; just now it is only one.’

‘Which one?’

‘Mind,’ he replied fiercely, refusing to acknowledge that he was starving. He threw his hat back, dashed his subscription book to the ground, and banged the unoffending bench with his fist.

‘As for Mind,’ he went on, ‘it’s a pity I was born with any. I wish I’d had no more Mind than my neighbours. It’s Mind, and nothing else, that has brought me to this.’

‘What is this, Mr. Fagg?’

‘Nothing to you. Go your ways; you are young; you have yet your hopes, which may come to nothing, same as mine; even though they are not, like mine, hopes of Glory and Learning. There’s Mr. Goslett in love with you; what is Mind to you? Nothing. And you in love with him. Very likely he’ll go off with another woman, and then you’ll find out what it is to be disappointed. What is Mind to anybody? Nothing. Do they care for it in the Museum? No. Does the head of the Egyptian Department care for it? Not he; not a bit. It’s a cruel and a selfish country.’

‘Oh, Mr. Fagg!’ She disregarded his allusion to herself, though it was sufficiently downright.

‘Yes; but I will be revenged. I will do something—yes—something that shall tell all Australia how I have been wronged; the colony of Victoria shall ring with my story. It shall

sap their loyalty; they shall grow discontented; they will import more Irishmen; there shall be separation. Yes; my friends shall demand separation in revenge for my treatment.'

'It is Christian to forgive, Mr. Fagg.'

'I will forgive, when I have had my revenge. No one shall say I am vindictive. Ah!'—he heaved a profound sigh. 'They gave me a dinner before I came away; they drank my health; they all told me of the reception I should get, and the glory that awaited me. Look at me now. Not one penny in my pocket. Not one man who believes in the Discovery. Wherefore I may truly say that it is better to be born without a brain.'

'This is your subscription book, I believe.' She took it and turned over its pages.

'Come, Mr. Fagg, you have come to the fifty-first copy of the book. Fifty-one copies ordered beforehand does not look like disbelief. May I add my name? That will make fifty-two. Twelve shillings and sixpence, I see. Oh, I shall look forward with the greatest interest to the appearance of the book, I assure you. Yet, you must not expect of a dressmaker much

knowledge of Hebrew, Mr Fagg. You great scholars must be contented with the simple admiration of ignorant work-girls.' He was too far gone in misery to be easily soothed, but he began to wish he had not said that cruel thing about possible desertion by her lover.

'Admiration!' he echoed with a hollow groan. 'And yesterday nothing to eat farther than threepence ; and the day before the same ; and the day before that. In Australia, when I was in the shoemaking line, there was always plenty to eat. Starvation, I suppose, goes to the brain. And is the cause of suicide, too. I know a beautiful place in the London Docks, where the water's green with minerals. I shall go there.' He pushed his hands deeper into his pockets, while his bushy eyebrows frowned so horribly that two children who were playing in the walk screamed with terror and fled without stopping. 'That water poisons a man directly he drops into it. It's surer and quicker than drowning, and doesn't hurt so much.'

'Come, Mr. Fagg,' said Angela, 'we allow something for the superior activity of great minds ; but we must not talk of despair when

there should be nothing beyond a little despondency.'

He shook his head.

'Too much reading has probably disordered your digestion, Mr. Fagg. You want rest and society, with sympathy—a woman's sympathy. Scholars, perhaps, are sometimes jealous.'

'Reading has emptied my purse,' he said. 'Sympathy won't fill it.'

'I do not know. Sympathy is a wonderful medicine sometimes. It works miracles. I think, Mr. Fagg, you had better let me pay my subscription in advance. You can give me the change when you please.'

She placed a sovereign in his hand. His fingers clutched it greedily; then his conscience smote him; her kind words, her flattery touched his heart.

'I cannot take it,' he said. 'Mr. Goslett warned me not to take your money. Besides'—he gasped and pointed to the subscription list. 'Fifty-one names! They've all paid their money for printing the book. I've eaten up all the money, and I shall eat up yours as well. Take the sovereign back. I can starve. When

I am dead, I would rather be remembered for my Discovery than for a shameful devourer of subscription money.'

She took him by the arm and led him, unresisting, to the Establishment. 'We must look after you, Mr. Fagg,' she said. 'Now, I have got a beautiful room, where no one sits all day long except sometimes a crippled girl and sometimes myself. In the evening the girls have it. You may bring your books there if you like, and sit there to work, when you please. And by the way,' she added this as if it were a matter of the very least consequence, hardly worth mentioning, 'if you would like to join us any day at dinner—we take our simple meal at one—the girls, no doubt, will all think it a great honour to have so distinguished a scholar at table with them.'

Mr. Fagg blushed with pleasure. Why, if the British Museum people treated him with contumely, if nobody would subscribe to his book, if he was weary of asking and being refused, here was a haven of refuge where he would receive some of the honour due to a scholar.

‘And now that you are here, Mr. Fagg,’ said Angela, when he had broken bread and given thanks, ‘you shall tell me all about your Discovery. Because, you see, we are so ignorant, we girls of the working classes, that I do not exactly know what is your Discovery.’

He sat down and asked for a piece of paper. With this assistance he began his exposition.

‘I was drawn to my investigation,’ he said solemnly, ‘by a little old book about the wisdom of the ancients. That is now five years ago, and I was then fifty-five years of age. No time to be lost, says I to myself, if anything is to be done. The more I read and the more I thought—I was in the shoemaking trade, and I’m not ashamed to own it, for it’s a fine business for such as are born with a head for thinking—the more I thought, I say, the more I was puzzled. For there seemed to me no way possible of reconciling what the scholars said.’

‘You have not told me the subject of your research, yet.’

‘Antiquity,’ he replied grandly. ‘All antiquity was the subject of my research. First, I read about the Egyptians, and the hiero-

glyphics. Then I got hold of a new book all about the Assyrians and the cuneiform character.'

'I see,' said Angela. 'You were attracted by the ancient inscriptions?'

'Naturally; without inscriptions, where are you? The scholars said this, and the scholars said that. They talked of reading the Egyptian language, and the Assyrian, and the Median, and what not. That wouldn't do for me.'

The audacity of the little man excited Angela's curiosity, which had been languid.

'Pray go on,' she said.

'The scholars have the same books to go to as me. Yet they don't go. They've eyes as good, but they won't use them. Now follow me, Miss, and you'll be surprised. When Abraham went down into Egypt, did he understand their language or didn't he?'

'Why, I suppose—at least, it is not said that he did not.'

'Of course he did. When Joseph went there, did he understand them? Of course he did. When Jacob and his sons came into the country, did they talk a strange speech? Not



SWAIN 30

'The audacity of the little man excited Angela's curiosity.'

they. When Solomon married an Egyptian princess, did he understand her talk? Why, of course he did. Now, do you guess what's coming next?'

'No, not at all.'

'None of the scholars could. Listen, then. If they all understood each other, they must have all talked the same language, mustn't they?'

'Why, it would seem so.'

'It's a sound argument, which can't be denied. Nobody can deny it—I defy them. If they understood each other, there must have been a common language. Where did this common language spread? Over all the countries thereabout. What was the common language? Hebrew.'

'Oh!' said Angela. 'Then, they all talked Hebrew!'

'Every man Jack. Nothing else known. What next? They wanted to write it. Now, we find what seems to be one character in Egypt, and another in Syria, and another in Arabia, and another in Phœnicia, and another in Judæa. Bless you, I know all about their

alphabets. What I say is—if a common language, then a common alphabet to write it with.’

‘I see, a common alphabet. Which you discovered perhaps.’

‘That, young lady, is my Discovery. That is the greatest Discovery of the age. I found it, myself, once a small shoemaker in a little Victorian township ; I alone found out that common alphabet, and have come over here to make it known. Not bad, says you, for a shoemaker who had to teach himself his own Hebrew.’

‘And the scholars here——’

‘They’re jealous, that’s what it is ; they’re jealous. Most of them have written books to prove other things, and they won’t give in and own that they’ve been wrong. My word ! The scholars—’ He paused and shook his hands before her face. ‘Some of them have got the Hebrew alphabet, and try to make out how one letter is a house and another a bull’s head. And so on. And some have got the cuneiforms, and they make out that one bundle of arrows is an A and another a B. And so on. And some have got the hieroglyphic, and it’s

the same game with all. While I—if you please—with my little plain simple Discovery just show that all the different alphabets—different to outward seeming—are really one and the same.’

‘This is very interesting,’ said Angela. The little man was glowing with enthusiasm and pride; he was transformed; he walked up and down throwing about his arms; he stood before her, looking almost tall; his eyes flashed with fire, and his voice was strong. ‘And can you read inscriptions by your simple alphabet?’

‘There is not,’ he replied, ‘a single inscription in the British Museum that I can’t read. I just sit down before it, with my Hebrew dictionary in my hand—I didn’t tell you I learned Hebrew on purpose, did I?—and I read that inscription, however long it is. Ah!’

‘This seems extraordinary. Can you show me your alphabet?’

He sat down, and began to make figures.

‘What is the simplest figure? A circle? a square? a nought? No. A triangle. Very good, then. Do you think they were such fools as to copy a great ugly bull’s head when

they'd got a triangle ready to their hands and easy to draw? Not they; they just made a triangle—so—' he drew an equilateral triangle on its base—' and called it the first letter; and two triangles, one a-top of the other—so—and called that the second letter. Then they stuck their triangle in another position, and it was the third letter; and in another, and it is the fourth—' Angela felt as if her head was swimming as he manipulated his triangles, and rapidly produced his primitive alphabet, which really did present some resemblance to the modern symbols. 'There—and there—and there—and what is that? and this? And so you've got the whole. Now, young lady, with this in your hand, which is the key to all learning—and the Hebrew dictionary—there's nothing you can't manage.'

'And an account of this is to be given in your book, is it?'

'That is the secret of my book. Now you know what it was I found out; now you see why my friends paid my passage home, and are now looking for the glory which they prophesied.'

‘Don’t get gloomy again, Mr. Fagg. It is a long lane, you know, that has no turning. Let us hope for better luck.’

‘No one will ever know,’ he went on, ‘the inscriptions that I have found—and read—in the Museum. They don’t know what they’ve got. I’ve told nobody yet, but they are all in my book, and I’ll tell you beforehand, Miss Kennedy, because you’ve been kind to me. Yes, a woman is best; I ought to have gone to the women first. I would marry you, Miss Kennedy, I would indeed; but—I am too old, and besides, I don’t think I could afford a family.’

‘I thank you, Mr. Fagg, all the same. You do me a great honour. But about these inscriptions?’

‘Mind, it’s a secret.’ He lowered his voice to a whisper. ‘There’s cuneiform inscriptions in the Museum with David and Jonathan on them,—ah!—and Balaam and Balak—Aho!—’ he positively chuckled over the thought of these great finds—‘and the whole life of Jezebel—Jezebel! what do you think of that? And what else do you think they have got,

only they don't know it? THE TWO TABLES OF STONE!! Nothing short of the Two Tables, with the Ten Commandments written out at length!!!'

Angela gazed with amazement at this admirable man; his faith in himself; his audacity; the grandeur of his conceptions; the wonderful power of his imagination overwhelmed her. But, to be sure, she had never before met a genuine enthusiast.

'I know where they are kept; nobody else knows. It is in a dark corner; they are each about two feet high; and there's a hole in the corner of each for Moses's thumb to hold them by. Think of that! I've read them all through, only'—he added with a look of bewilderment—'I think there must be something wrong with my Hebrew dictionary, because none of the commandments read quite right. One or two come out quite surprising. Yet the stones must be right, mustn't they? There can be no question about that; and the Discovery must be right. No question about that. And as for the dictionaries—who put them together? tell me that! Yah! the scholars!'

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE MISSING LINK.

THE Professor, then, started on his quest with a cheerful heart, caused by the certainty of dinner for some days to come. But he was an honest Professor, and he did not prolong his absence for the sake of those dinners. On the other hand, he made the most rapid despatch consistent with thorough work, and returned after an absence of four days, bearing with him the fruits of his research.

‘I think,’ said Harry, after reading his report—‘I think, Miss Kennedy, that we have found a Missing Link.’

‘Then they really will make their claim good?’

‘I did not say that—quite. I said that we have found a Missing Link. There might be, if you will think of it—two. One of them

would have connected the condescending wheelwright with his supposed parent, the last Lord Davenant. The other would connect him with quite another father.'

The truth, which was for some time carefully concealed from the illustrious pair, was, in fact, this.

There is a village of Davenant surrounding or adjoining a castle of Davenant, just as Alnwick, Arundel, Durham, Lancaster, Chepstow, Raglan, and a great many more English towns have a castle near them. And whether Davenant town was built to be protected by the castle, or the castle for the protection of the town, is a point on which I must refer you to the county historian, who knows all about it and is not likely to deceive you on so important a point. The castle is now a picturesque ruin, with a country house built beside it. In this country house the last Lord Davenant died and the last heir to the title was born. There is an excellent old church, with a tower and ivy, and high-pitched roof, as an ancient church should have, and in the family vault under the chancel all the Davenants, except the last heir, lie buried.

There is also in the village a small country inn called the Davenant Arms, where the Professor put up, and where he made himself extraordinarily popular, because, finding himself among an assemblage of folk slow to see and slower still to think, he astonished them for four nights consecutively. The rustics still tell, and will continue to tell so long as memory lasts, of the wonderful man who took their money out of their waistcoats, exchanged handkerchiefs, conveyed potatoes into strange coat pockets, read their thoughts, picked out the cards they had chosen, made them take a card he had chosen whether they wanted it or not, caused balls of glass to vanish, changed halfpence into half-crowns, had a loaded pistol fired at himself and caught the ball, with other great marvels all for nothing, to oblige and astonish the villagers, and for the good of the house. These were the recreations of his evening hours. The mornings he spent in the vestry of the old church searching the registers.

There was nothing professional about it, only the drudgery of clerk's work ; to do it

at all was almost beneath his dignity ; yet he went through with it conscientiously, and restrained himself from inviting the sexton, who stayed with him, to lend him his handkerchief or to choose a card. Nor did he even hide a card in the sexton's pocket, and then convey it into the parish register. Nothing of the sort. He was sternly practical, and searched diligently. Nevertheless, he noted how excellent a place for the simpler feats would be the reading-desk. The fact is, that gentlemen of his profession never go to church, and therefore are ignorant of the uses of its various parts. On Sunday morning they lie in bed ; on Sunday afternoon they have dinner, and perhaps the day's paper, and on Sunday evening they gather at a certain house of call for conjurers in Drury Lane and practise on each other. There is, therefore, no room in the conjurer's life for church. Some remedy should be found for this by the bishops.

‘What have I got to look for?’ said the Professor, as the sexton produced the old books. ‘Well, I’ve got to find what families there were living here a hundred years ago, or

thereabouts, named Davenant, and what Christian names they had, and whether there were two children born and baptised here in one year, both bearing the name of Davenant.'

The sexton shook his head. He was only a middle-aged man, and therefore not yet arrived at sextonial ripeness ; for a sexton only begins to be mellow when he is ninety or thereabouts. He knew nothing of the Davenants except that there were once Lords Davenant, now lying in the family vault below the chancel, and none of them left in the parish at all, nor any in his memory, nor in that of his father's before him, so far as he could tell.

After a careful examination of the books, the Professor was enabled to state with confidence that at the time in question the Davenant name was borne by none but the family at the castle ; that there were no cousins of the name in the place ; and that the heir born in that year was christened on such a day, and received the name of Timothy Clitheroe.

If this had been the only evidence, the case would have made in favour of the Canaan City claimant ; but, unfortunately, there was another

discovery made by the Professor, at sight of which he whistled and then shook his head, and then considered whether it would not be best to cut out the page, while the sexton thought he was forcing a card, or palming a ball, or boiling an egg, or some other ingenious feat of legerdemain. For he instantly perceived that the fact recorded before his eyes had an all-important bearing upon the case of his illustrious friends.

The little story which he saw was, in short, this.

In the same year of the birth of the infant Timothy Clitheroe, there was born of a poor vagrom woman, who wandered no one knew where from into the parish, and died in giving him to the world, a man-child. There was no one to rejoice over him, or to welcome him, or to claim him, therefore he became parish property, and had to be christened, fed, flogged, admonished, and educated, so far as education in those days was considered necessary, at the charge of the parish. The first step was to give him a name. For it was formerly, and may be still, a custom in country parishes to

name a waif of this kind after the village itself, which accounts for many odd surnames, such as Stepney, Marybone, or Hoxton. It was not a good custom, because it might lead to complications, as perhaps it did in this case, when there was already another family legitimately entitled to bear the name. The authorities, following this custom, conferred upon the baby the lordly name of Davenant. Then, as it was necessary that he should have a Christian name, and it would be a pity to waste good Richard or Robin upon a beggar brat, they gave him the day of the week on which he was born. This was intended to keep him humble, and to remind him that he had no right to any of the distinguished Christian names bestowed upon respectably born children.

He was called Saturday Davenant.

The name, the date, and the circumstances were briefly recorded in the parish register.

In most cases this book contains three entries for each name, those of the three important events in his life; the beginning, the marrying, which is the making or the marring, and the ending. One does not, of course, count

the minor occasions on which he may be mentioned, as on the birth or death of a child. The Professor turned over the pages of the register in vain for any further entry of this Saturday Davenant.

He appeared no more. His one public appearance, so far as history records it, was on that joyful occasion when, held in hireling arms, he was received into the Christian Church. The one thing to which he was born was his brotherhood in the Christian faith, no doubt the grandest of all possessions, yet in itself not professing to provide the material comforts of life. The baby was presented at the font, received a contemptuous name, squealed a little, no doubt, when he felt the cold water, and then—then—nothing more. What he did, whither he went, where he died, might be left to conjecture. A parish brat, a cottage home, bread and bacon to eat, with more bread than bacon, plenty of stick, the Church Catechism and particular attention called to the clauses about picking and stealing, practical work as a scarce-crow at seven, the plough later on; for pleasures, quarter-staff, wrestling, fighting, bull-

baiting, and perhaps poaching, with strong beer and small beer for drink ; presently a wife, then children, then old age, then death. One was free to conjecture, because there was no more mention of this baby ; he did not marry in the parish nor did he die in it. He therefore went away. In those days, if a man went away, it was for one of two reasons ; either he fell into trouble and went away, to escape the wrath of the Squire ; or he enlisted, marched off with beer in his head and ribbons in his hat, swore terribly with the army in Flanders, and presently earned the immortal glory which England rejoices to confer upon the private soldier who falls upon the ensanguined field. The enjoyment of this glory is such a solid, substantial, and satisfying thing, that fighting and war and the field of honour are, and always will be, greatly beloved and desired by private soldiers.

There was no other entry of this boy's name. When the Professor had quite satisfied himself upon this point he turned back to the first entry, and then became aware of a note in faded ink, now barely legible, written in the

margin. It was as follows, and he copied it exactly :—

‘Y^e above s^d Saturday D^{nt} was a Roag in Grane : he was bro’t up in the Fear of God yet feared Him not ; taught his Duty, yet did it not : admonished without stint of Rodd in Virtue, yet still inclined to Vice : he was app^d to the Wheelwright : was skillful, yet indolent : notorious as a Pocher who could not be caught : a Deceiver of Maidens : a Tossplot and a Striker. Compelled to leave the Parish to avoid Prison and the Lash he went to London, *Latronum officina*. Was reported to have been sent to His Majesty’s Plantations in Virginia, whereof nothing certain is known.’

This was the note which the Professor read and copied out, with misgivings that it would not prove acceptable. Of course, he knew the story, and quite understood what this might mean.

The next day, nothing more remaining to be found in the register, the Professor examined the brasses and tablets in the church, and paid a visit to the castle. And when he had faithfully executed his commission he went away, amid the regrets of the villagers, who had never

before been entertained by so delightful and surprising a stranger, and brought back his spoils.

‘What are we to think?’ said Harry after reading this report. ‘“The Roag in Grane,” this wheelwright by trade, who can he be but the grandfather of our poor old friend?’

‘I fear it must be so,’ said Angela. ‘Saturday Davenant. Remember the little book.’

‘Yes,’ said Harry, ‘the little book came into my mind at once.’

‘Not a doubt,’ added the Professor. ‘Why, it stands to reason. The fellow found himself a long way from England, among strangers, with no money and only his trade. What was to prevent him from pretending to be one of the family whose name he bore?’

‘And at the same time,’ said Harry, ‘with reserve. He never seems to have asserted that he was the son of Lord Davenant; he only threw out ambiguous words, he fired the imagination of his son, he christened him by the name of the lost heir, he pretended that it was his own Christian name, and it was not until they found out that this was the hereditary name that the claim was thought of. This

Poacher and Striker seems to have possessed considerable native talent.'

'But what,' asked Angela, 'are we to do?'

'Let us do nothing, Miss Kennedy. We have our secret, and we may keep it for the present. Meantime, the case is hopeless on account of the absolute impossibility of connecting the wheelwright with the man supposed to have been drowned. Let them go on "enjoying" the title, ignorant of the existence of this unlucky Saturday Davenant.'

So, for the present, the thing was hidden away and nothing was said about it. And though about this time the Professor gave one or two entertainments in the drawing-room, we cannot suppose that his silence was bought, and it would be unjust to the noble profession of which he was a member to think that he would let out the secret had not Miss Kennedy paid him for their performance. Indeed, the Professor was an extremely honourable man, and would have scorned to betray confidence, and it was good of Miss Kennedy to find out that an evening of magic and miracle would do the girls good.

But a profound pity seized the heart of Angela. These poor people who believed themselves to be entitled to an English peerage, who were so mistaken, who would be so disappointed, who were so ignorant, who knew so little what it was they claimed—could not something be done to lessen their disappointment—to break their fall?

She pondered long over this difficulty. That they would in the end have to return to their own country was a thing about which there could be no doubt whatever; that they should return with no knowledge whatever of the reality of the thing they had claimed, what it meant, what it involved, its splendours and its obligations, seemed to her a very great pity. A little experience, she thought, even a glimpse of the life led by the best-bred and most highly cultivated and richest people of England, would be of so much advantage to them, that it would show them their own unfitness for the rank which they assumed and claimed. And presently she arrived at a project which she put into execution without delay. What this was you will presently see.

CHAPTER XXIV.

LORD JOCELYN'S TROUBLES.

As the season advanced, and the autumn deepened into winter, Angela found that there were certain social duties which it was impossible altogether to escape. The fiction of the country-house was good enough for the general world, but for her more intimate friends and cousins this would not do for long. Therefore, while she kept the facts of her present occupation and place of residence a secret from all except Constance Woodcote, now the unsympathising, she could not wholly shut herself off from the old circle. Among others there was one lady whose invitations she was in a sense bound to accept. What her obligations were, and who this lady was, belongs in no way to this history—that is to say, the explanation belongs to Angela's simple chronicle of the old

days when she was only Miss Messenger, the heiress presumptive of the Great Brewery. Therefore it need not concern us. Suffice it to say that she was a lady in society, and that she gave great dinners and held other gatherings, and was at all times properly awake to the attractions which the young, and beautiful, and wealthy Angela Messenger lent to her receptions.

On this occasion Constance Woodcote, among others, was invited to meet her old friend ; she came, but she was ungracious, and Angela felt, more than she had expected, how great already was the gulf between the old days of Newnham and her life of active, practical work. Six months before, such coldness would have hurt and pained her ; now she hardly felt it. Yet Constance meant to demonstrate by a becoming frost of manner how grievous was her disappointment about those scholarships. Then there were half-a-dozen men—unmarried men, men in society, men of clubs, men who felt strongly that the possession of Miss Messenger's millions might reconcile them to matrimony, and were much interested by the possibility of

an introduction to her, and came away disappointed because they got nothing out of her, not even an encouragement to talk ; and everybody said that she was singularly cold, *distracte*, and even embarrassed that evening ; and those who had heard that Miss Messenger was a young lady of great conversational powers, went away cynically supposing that any young lady with less than half her money could achieve the same reputation at the same cost of energy. The reason of this coldness, this preoccupation, was as follows.

The dinner party was large, and the conversation by no means general. So far as Angela was concerned, it was held entirely with the man who took her down, and his name was Lord Jocelyn le Breton—a rugged-faced man, with a pleasing manner and agreeable voice ; no longer young. He talked to her a good deal in a light, irresponsible vein, as if it mattered very little what he said, so that it amused the young lady. He discoursed about many things, principally about dinners, asking Angela what were her own views as to dinners, and expostulating with her feminine contempt for the subject.

‘Each dinner,’ he said, ‘should be like a separate and distinct work of art, and should be contrived for different kinds of wine. There should be a champagne dinner, for instance, light and composed of many dishes, but some of these substantial; there should be a claret dinner, grave and conscientious; a Burgundy dinner of few courses, and those solid; a German wine dinner, in which only the simplest *plats* should appear. But unto harmony and consistency in dining we have not yet arrived. Perhaps, Miss Messenger, you may be induced to bring your intellect to bear upon the subject. I hear you took high honours at Newnham lately.’

She laughed.

‘You do too much honour to my intellect, Lord Jocelyn. At Newnham they teach us political economy, but they have not trusted us with the art of dining. Do you know, we positively did not care much what we had for dinner!’

‘My ward, Harry, used to say—but I forget if you ever met him.’

‘I think not. What is his name?’

‘Well, he used to bear my name, and

everybody knew him as Harry le Breton ; but he had no right to it, because he was no relation of mine, and so he gave it up and took his own.'

'Oh !' Angela felt profoundly uninterested in Mr. Henry le Breton.

'Yes. And now you never will meet him. For he is gone'—Lord Jocelyn uttered these words in so sepulchral a tone that Angela gave them greater significance than they deserved.

'I am very sorry,' she said.

'No, Miss Messenger, he is not dead. He is only dead to society. He has gone out of the world ; he has returned to—in fact, his native rank of life.'

Angela reddened. What *could* he mean ?

'You interest me, Lord Jocelyn. Do you say that your ward has voluntarily given up society, and—and—everything ?' She thought of herself at the moment, and also, but vaguely, of Harry Goslett. For, although she knew that this young man had refused some kind of offer which included idleness, she had never connected him in her mind quite with her own

rank and station. How could she? He was only a cabinet-maker, whose resemblance to a gentleman she had learned to accept without any further wonder.

‘He gave up everything : he laughed over it : he took a header into the mob just as if he was going to enjoy the plunge. But did you not hear of it? Everybody talked about it—the story got into the Society journals—and people blamed me for telling him the truth.’

‘I have not been in London much this year, therefore I heard nothing,’ said Angela. Just then the dinner came to an end.

‘Will you tell me more about your ward, Lord Jocelyn?’ she asked, as she left him. His words had raised in her mind a vague and uncertain anxiety.

Half an hour later he came to her side. The room was by this time full, and Angela was surrounded. But she made room for Lord Jocelyn, and presently the others dropped away and they could talk. A young lady began, too, a long and very brilliant piece of music under cover of which everybody would talk.

‘Do you really want to hear my trouble

about Harry?' he asked. 'You look a very sympathetic young lady, and perhaps you will feel for me. You see, I brought him up in ignorance of his father, whom he always imagined to be a gentleman; whereas he was only a sergeant in a Line regiment. What is it, Miss Messenger?'

For she became suddenly white in the cheek. Could there be two Harrys, sons of sergeants, who had taken this downward plunge? More wonderful than a pair of Timothy Clitheroes.

'It is nothing, Lord Jocelyn. Pray go on. Your adopted son, then——'

'I had always resolved to tell him all about his people when he was twenty-three. Who would have thought, however, that he would take it as he did?'

'You forget that you have not told me what he did do. If I am to sympathise, you must tell me all.'

'As far as the world knows, he went away on leave, so to speak. Perhaps it is only on leave, after all. But it is a long leave, and it looks more like desertion.'

'You are mysterious, Lord Jocelyn.'

‘Are you curious, Miss Messenger?’

‘Say, am I sympathetic? Tell me as much as you can about your ward.’

Lord Jocelyn looked in his listener’s face. Yes; there was sympathy in it and interest, both, as phrenologists say, largely developed.

‘Then I will explain to you, Miss Messenger, how the boy did this most remarkable and unexpected thing.’ He paused a moment considering. ‘Imagine a boy whom I had taken away from his own people at three, or thereabouts, so that he should never know anything of them at all, or dream about them, or yearn, you know, or anything of that kind—an orphan, too, with nothing but an Uncle Bunker—it is inconceivable!’

‘But we do not get on,’ said Angela in great impatience; yet relieved to find from the reference to her worthy friend Bunker that there was only one Harry. ‘What is inconceivable?’

‘I am coming to that. I gave the boy the best education I could get for him; he was so eager and apt that he taught himself more than he could be taught; if he saw anybody doing a thing well, he was never satisfied till he could

do it as well himself—not better, mark you! a cad might have wanted to do it better: a gentleman is content to do it as well as any—any other gentleman. There is hardly anything he could not do; there was nobody who did not love him; he was a favourite in society; he had hosts of friends; nobody cared who was his father: what did that matter? As I put it to him, I said, “Look at So-and-so and So-and-so: who are their fathers? Who cares? Who asks?” Yet when he learned the truth he broke away, gave up all, and went back to his own relations—to Whitechapel!’

Angela blushed again, and her lip trembled a little. Then she said softly:

‘To Whitechapel! That is very interesting to me. Because, Lord Jocelyn, I belong to Whitechapel myself.’

‘Do you?’ She might as well have said that she belonged to Seven Dials. In fact, much better, because in his young days, his Corinthian days, Lord Jocelyn had often repaired to Seven Dials to see noble sportsmen *chez* Ben Caunt, and rat-killing and cock-fighting, and many other beautiful forms of sport.

‘Do you really? Do you belong to that remarkable part of London?’

‘Certainly. My grandfather — did you know him?’

Lord Jocelyn shook his head.

‘He had the Brewery, you know, Messenger Marsden and Company, in Whitechapel. He was born there, and always called himself a Whitechapel man. He seemed to be proud of it, so that in common filial respect I, too, should be proud of it. I am, in fact, a Whitechapel granddaughter.’

‘But that does not seem to help my unlucky Harry.’

‘It gives one a little more sympathy, perhaps,’ she said. ‘And that is, you know, so very useful a possession.’

‘Yes,’ but he did not seem to recognise its usefulness as regards his ward. ‘Well, he went to Whitechapel with a light heart. He would look round him, make the acquaintance of his own people, then he would come back again and we would go on just as usual. At least, he did not exactly say this, but I understood him so. Because it seemed impossible

that a man who had once lived in society, among ourselves, and formed one of us, could ever dream of living down there.'

Angela laughed. From her superior knowledge of 'down there' she laughed.

'He went away, and I was left without him, for the first time for twenty years. It was pretty dull. He said he would give the thing a trial; he wrote to me that he was trying it, that it was not so bad as it seemed, and yet he talked as if the experiment would be a short one. I left him there. I went away for a cruise in the Mediterranean; when I came home he returned to me.'

'He did return, then?'

'Yes, he came back one evening a good deal changed. I should not have thought it possible for a boy to change so much in so short a time. He wasn't ill-fed; he hadn't suffered any privation, apparently; but he was changed: he was more thoughtful; his smile and his laugh were not so ready. Poor boy!'

Lord Jocelyn sighed heavily. Angela's sympathy grew deeper, for he evidently loved the 'boy.'

‘What had he done, then?’

‘He came to say farewell to me; he thanked me for — you know what a good honest lad would say; and he told me that he had had an offer made to him of an unexpected nature which he had determined to accept. You see, he is a clever fellow with his fingers, he can play and paint and carve, and do all sorts of things. And among his various arts and accomplishments he knows how to turn a lathe, and so he has become a joiner or a cabinet-maker, and he told me that he has got an appointment in some great factory or works or something, as cabinet-maker in ordinary.’

‘What is his name?’

‘Harry Goslett.’

‘Goslett! Goslett!’ Here she blushed again, and once more made play with the fan. ‘Has he got a relation, a certain Mr. Bunker?’

‘Why—yes—I told you, an Uncle Bunker.’

‘Then I remember the name. And, Lord Jocelyn, I hope you will be grateful to me, because I have been the humble means of procuring him this distinguished post. Mr.

Bunker, in fact, was, or conceived that he had been, useful to my grandfather, and was said to be disappointed at getting nothing by the will. Therefore I endeavoured to make some return by taking his nephew into the House. That is all.'

'And a great deal more than enough, because, Miss Messenger, you have all out of your kindness done a great mischief, for if you had not employed him I am quite certain no one else would. Then he would have had to come back to me. Send him away. Do send him away, Miss Messenger. There are lots of cabinet-makers to be had. Then he will come back to society, and I will present him to you and he shall thank you.'

She smiled and shook her head.

'People are never sent away from the Brewery so long as they behave properly. But it is strange indeed that your ward should voluntarily surrender all the advantages of life and social position for the hard work and poor pay of an artisan. Was it . . . was it affection for his cousins?' She blushed deeply as she put this simple question.

‘Strange indeed. When he came to me the other night, he told me a long story about men being all alike in every rank of life—I have noticed much the same thing in the army; of course he did not have the impudence to say that women are all alike; and he talked a quantity of prodigious nonsense about living among his own people. Presently, however, I got out of him the real truth.’

‘What was that?’

‘He confessed that he was in love.’

‘With a young lady of Whitechapel? This does great credit to the excellent education you gave him, Lord Jocelyn.’ She blushed for the fourth or fifth time, and he wondered why, and she held her fan before her face. ‘But, perhaps,’ she added, ‘you are wrong, and women of all ranks, like men, are the same.’

‘Perhaps, I ought not to have told you this—Miss Messenger. Now you will despise him. Yet he had the impudence to say that she was a lady—positively a lady—this Whitechapel dressmaker.’

‘A dressmaker?—oh!’ She threw into her voice a little of that icy coldness with which

ladies are expected to receive this kind of announcement.

‘Ah! now you care no more about him. I might have known that your sympathy would cease directly you heard all. He went into raptures over this young milliner. She is as beautiful as the day; she is graceful, accomplished, well-bred, well-mannered, a queen——’

‘No doubt,’ said Angela, still frozen. ‘But really, Lord Jocelyn, as it is Mr. Goslett, the cabinet-maker, and not you, who is in love with this paragon, we may be spared her praises.’

‘And, which is more remarkable still, she won’t have anything to say to him.’

‘That is indeed remarkable. But perhaps, as she is the Queen of Dressmakers, she is looking for the King of Cabinet-Makers.’

‘No doubt,’ said Lord Jocelyn; ‘I think the music is coming to an end. However—Miss Messenger, one favour.’

‘A dozen, Lord Jocelyn, if I can grant them.’

‘He refuses to take any help from me; he

lives on work paid for at the rate of tenpence an hour. If you will not send him away—then—oh, then——’

‘Quick, Lord Jocelyn, what is it?’

‘Tax the resources of the Brewery. Put on the odd twopence. It is the gift of the Samaritan—make it a shilling an hour.’

‘I will, Lord Jocelyn—hush! The music is just over, and I hope that the dressmaker will relent, and that there will be a wedding in Stepney Church, and that they will be happy ever after. Oh, brave and loyal lover! He gives up all, all—’ she looked round the room filled with guests, and her great eyes became limpid, and her voice fell to a murmur—‘for love, for love. Do you think, Lord Jocelyn, that the dressmaker will continue to be obdurate? But perhaps she does not know, or cannot suspect, what he has thrown away—for her sake—happy dressmaker!’

‘I think,’ said Lord Jocelyn afterwards, ‘that if Harry had seen Miss Messenger before he saw his dressmaker we shouldn’t have heard so much about the beautiful life of a working man. Why the devil couldn’t I wait? This

girl is a Helen of Troy, and Harry should have written his name Paris, and carried her off, by gad ! before Menelaus or any other fellow got hold of her. What a woman ! What a match it would have been !'

CHAPTER XXV.

AN INVITATION.

VERY shortly after the fatal discovery made by the Professor, Lord Davenant received the first outside recognition—so to speak—of his rank. It is true that no one within a mile of Stepney Green—that is, anywhere between Aldgate Pump and Bow Church—would have had the hardihood to express a doubt on the validity of a claim which conferred a lustre upon the neighbourhood; yet even Lord Davenant, not remarkable for quickness of perception, was sharp enough to know that recognition at Stepney is not altogether the same thing as recognition at Westminster. He was now once more tolerably comfortable in his mind. The agonies of composition were over, thanks to his young friend's assistance; the labour of transcription was finished; he felt, in looking

at the bundle of papers, all the dignity of successful authorship; the Case, in fact, was now complete and ready for presentation to the Queen, or to any one, Lord Chancellor, Prime Minister, Lord Chamberlain, or American Minister, who would undertake and faithfully promise to lay it before Her Majesty. For his own part, brought up in the belief that the British Lion habitually puts his heroic tail between his legs when the name of America is mentioned, he thought that the Minister of the States was the proper person to present his Case. Further, the days of fatness were come again. Clara Martha, in some secret way known only to herself, was again in command of money: once more bacon and tea, and bread and butter, if not coffee, cream, and buckwheat cakes, with maple syrup and hot compone—delicacies of his native land—were spread upon the board at eight in the morning; and again the succulent steak of Stepney, yielding to none, not even to him of Fleet Street, appeared at stroke of one; and the noble lord could put up his feet and rest the long and peaceful morning through, unre-

proached by his consort. Therefore he felt no desire for any change, but would have been quite content to go on for ever enjoying his title among this simple folk, and careless about the splendours of his rank. How Clara Martha got the money he did not inquire. We, who know, may express our fears that here was another glaring violation of political economy, and that the weekly honorarium received every Saturday by Lady Davenant was by no means adequately accounted for by her weekly work. Still, her style was very fine, and there were no more delicate workers in the association than the little peeress with the narrow shoulders and the bright eyes.

Not one word, mark you, spoken of Saturday Davenant—that Roag in Grane—and the Professor as respectful as if his lordship had sat through thirty years of deliberation in the Upper House, and Mr. Goslett humbly deferential to her ladyship, and in secret confidential and familiar, even rollicking, with my lord, and Miss Kennedy respectfully thoughtful for their welfare.

This serenity was troubled and dissipated

by the arrival of a letter addressed to Lady Davenant.

She received it—a simple letter on ordinary note-paper—with surprise, and opened it with some suspicion. Her experience of letters was not of late happy, inasmuch as her recent correspondence had been chiefly with American friends, who reminded her how they had all along told her that it was no good expecting that the Davenant claim would be listened to, and now she saw for herself, and had better come home again and live among the plain folk of Canaan, and praise the Lord for making her husband an American citizen—with much more to the same effect, and cruel words from nephew Nathaniel, who had no ambition, and would have sold his heirship to the coronet for a few dollars.

She looked first at the signature, and turned pale, for it was from that mysterious young lady, almost divine in the eyes of Stepney, because she was so rich, Miss Messenger.

‘Lord!’ cried Mrs. Bormalack. ‘Do read it quick.’

Her ladyship read it through very slowly,

much too slowly for her landlady's impatience.

Her pale cheeks flushed with pride and joy when she comprehended exactly what the letter meant; she drew herself up straight, and her shoulders became so sloping that the uneasy feeling about her clothes, already alluded to, once more passed through Mrs. Bormalack's sympathetic mind.

'It will be a change, indeed, for us,' she murmured, looking at her husband.

'Change?' cried the landlady.

'What change?' asked his lordship. 'Clara Martha, I do not want any change; I am comfortable here, I am treated with respect, the place is quiet, I do not want to change.'

He was a heavy man and lethargic—change meant some kind of physical activity—he disliked movement.

His wife tossed her head with impatience.

'Oh!' she cried, 'he would rather sit in his armchair than walk even across the Green to get his coronet. Shame upon him! O Carpenter! Shh!'

His lordship quailed and said no more.

That allusion to his father's trade was not intended as a sneer; the slothfulness of his parent it was which the lady hurled at his lordship's head. No one could tell, no living writer is able to depict faithfully, the difficulties encountered and overcome by this resolute woman in urging her husband to action; how she had first to persuade him to declare that he was the heir to the extinct title; how she had next to drag him away from Canaan City; how she had to bear with his moanings, lamentations, and terrors, when he found himself actually on board the steamer, and saw the land slowly disappearing, while the great ship rolled beneath his unaccustomed feet, and consequences which he had not foreseen began to follow. These were things of the past, but it had been hard to get him away even from Wellclose Square, which he found comfortable, making allowance for the disrespectful Dane; and now—but it must and should be done.

‘His lordship,’ said the little woman, thinking she had perhaps said too much, ‘is one of them who take root wherever you set them down. He takes after his grandfather, the

Honourable Timothy Clitheroe. Set himself down in Canaan City, and took root at once, never wanted to go away. And the Davenants, I am told, never left the village from the day they built their castle there till the last lord died there. In other people, Mrs. Bormalack, it might be called sloth, but in his lordship's case we can only say that he is quick to take root. That is all, ma'am. And when we move him, it is like tearing him up by the roots.'

'It is,' said his lordship, clinging to the arms of the chair; 'it is.'

The letter was as follows, and Lady Davenant read it aloud:—

'Dear Lady Davenant,—I have quite recently learned that you and Lord Davenant are staying at a house on Stepney Green which happens to be my property. Otherwise, perhaps, I might have remained in ignorance of this most interesting circumstance. I have also learned that you have crossed the Atlantic for the purpose of presenting a claim to the Davenant title, which was long supposed to be

extinct, and I hasten to convey to you my most sincere wishes for your success.

‘I am at this moment precluded from doing myself the pleasure of calling upon you, for reasons with which I will not trouble you. I hope, however, to be allowed to do so before very long. Meantime, I take the liberty of offering you the hospitality of my own house in Portman Square, if you will honour me by accepting it, as your place of residence during your stay in London. You will perhaps find Portman Square a central place, and more convenient for you than Stepney Green, which, though it possesses undoubted advantages in healthful air and freedom from London fog, is yet not altogether a desirable place of residence for a lady of your rank.

‘I am aware that in addressing you without the ceremony of an introduction I am taking what may seem to you a liberty. I may be pardoned on the ground that I feel so deep an interest in your romantic story, and so much sympathy with your courage in crossing the ocean to prosecute your claim. Such claims as these are, as you know, jealously

regarded and sifted with the greatest care, so that there may be difficulty in establishing a perfectly made-out case, and one which shall satisfy the House of Lords as impregnable to any attack. There is, however, such a thing as a moral certainty, and I am well assured that Lord Davenant would not have left his native country had he not been convinced in his own mind that his cause is a just one, and that his claim is a duty owed to his illustrious ancestors. So that, whether he wins or loses, whether he succeeds or fails, he must in either case command our respect and our sympathy. Under these circumstances I trust that I may be forgiven, and that your ladyship will honour my poor house with your presence. I will send, always provided that you accept, my carriage for you on any day that you may appoint. Your reply may be directed here, because all letters are forwarded to me, though I am not, at the present moment, residing at my town house.

‘Believe me to remain, dear Lady Davenant, yours very faithfully,

‘ANGELA MARSDEN MESSENGER.’

‘It is a beautiful letter!’ cried Mrs. Bormalack, ‘and to think of Miss Messenger knowing that this house is one of hers! Why, she’s got hundreds. Now, I wonder who could have told her that you were here.’

‘No doubt,’ said her ladyship, ‘she saw it in the papers.’

‘What a Providence that you came here! If you had stayed at Wellclose Square, which is a low place and only fit for foreigners, she never would have heard about you. Well, it will be a sad blow losing your ladyship, but of course you must go. You can’t refuse such a noble offer; and though I’ve done my best, I’m sure, to make his lordship comfortable, yet I know that the dinner hasn’t always been such as I could wish, though as good as the money would run to. And we can’t hope to rival Miss Messenger, of course, in housekeeping, though I *should* like to hear what she gives for dinner.’

‘You shall, Mrs. Bormalack,’ said her ladyship; ‘I will send you word myself, and I am sure we are very grateful to you for all your kindness, and especially at times when—when

my husband's nephew Nathaniel, who is not the whole-souled and high-toned man that the heir to a peerage ought to be——'

'Don't speak of it,' interrupted the good landlady, 'don't speak of it, your ladyship. It will always be my pride to remember that your ladyship thought I did my little best. But, there, with mutton at elevenpence ha'penny!'

The name of Portman Square suggested nothing at all to the illustrious pair. It might just as well have been Wellclose Square. But here was an outside recognition of them; and from a very rich young lady, who perhaps was herself acquainted with some of the members of the Upper House.

'It is a proper letter,' said Lady Davenant critically, 'a letter written in a becoming spirit. There's many things to admire in England, but the best thing is the respect to rank. Now, in our own City did they respect his lordship for his family? Not a mite. The boys drew pictures of him on the walls with a crown on his head and a sword in his hand.'

'Must we go, Clara Martha?' his lordship asked in a tremulous voice.

‘Yes, we must go ; we must show people that we are ready to assume the dignity of the position. As for my husband, Mrs. Bormalack’—she looked at him sideways while she addressed the landlady—‘there are times when I feel that nothing but noble blood confers real dignity’—his lordship coughed—‘real dignity and a determination to have your rights, and a behaviour according.’

Lord Davenant straightened his back and held up his head. But when his wife left him he drooped it again and looked sad.

Lady Davenant took the letter with her, to show Miss Kennedy.

‘I shall never forget old friends, my dear,’ she said kindly, when Angela had read it through, ‘never ; and your kindness in my distress I could not forget if I tried.’ The tears stood in her eyes as she spoke. ‘We are standing now on the very threshold of Greatness ; this is the first step to Recognition ; a short time more, and my husband will be in his right place among the British peers. As for myself, I don’t seem to mind any, Miss Kennedy. It’s for him that I mind. Once in

his own place, he will show the world what he is capable of. You only think of him as a sleepy old man, who likes to put up his feet and shut his eyes. So he is—so he is. But wait till he gets his own. Then you will see. As for eloquence, now, I remember one Fourth of July—but of course we were Amer'cans then.'

'Indeed, Lady Davenant, we shall all be rejoiced if you succeed. But do not forget Miss Messenger's warning. There is a moral success, and there is a legal success. You may have to be contented with the former. But that should be enough for you, and you would then return to your own people with triumph.'

'Aurelia Tucker,' said her ladyship, smiling gently, 'will wish she hadn't taken up the prophesying line. I shall forgive her, though envy is indeed a hateful passion. However, we cannot all have illustrious ancestors, though since our own elevation, there's not a man, woman, or child in Canaan City, except the Dutchmen, who hasn't connected himself with an English family, and the demand for Red-books and books of the County Families is

more than you could believe, and they do say that many a British peer will have to tremble for his title.'

'Come,' said Angela, interrupting these interesting facts, 'come, Lady Davenant, I knew beforehand of this letter, and Miss Messenger has given me work in anticipation of your visit.'

She led the little lady to the show room, and here, laid out on the chairs, were marvels. For there were dresses in silk and in velvet: dresses of the best silk, moiré antique, brocaded silk, silk that would stand upright, of itself, without the aid of a chair back, and velvet of the richest, the blackest, and the most costly. There could be no doubt whatever as to the person for whom these dresses had been designed, because nobody else had such narrow and such sloping shoulders. Never in her dreams had her ladyship thought it possible that she should wear such dresses.

'They are a present from Miss Messenger,' said Miss Kennedy. 'Now, if you please, we will go into the trying-on room.'

Then Lady Davenant discovered that these dresses were trimmed with lace, also of the

most beautiful and delicate kind. She had sometimes seen lace during her professional career, but she never possessed any, and the sight of it created a kind of yearning in her heart to have it on, actually on her sleeves and round her neck.

When she was dressed in her velvet with the lace trimming she looked a very stately little lady. When Angela had hung about her neck a heavy gold chain with a watch and seals ; when she had deftly added a touch to her still luxuriant hair, and set in it a small aigrette of brilliants ; when she had put on her a pair of gloves and given her a large and beautifully painted fan, there was no nobler-looking lady in the land, for all she was so little.

Then Angela curtsied low and begged her ladyship to examine the dress in the glass. Her ladyship surveyed herself with an astonishment and delight impossible to be repressed, although they detracted somewhat from the dignity due to the dress.

‘ Oh, Aurelia ! ’ she exclaimed, as if, in the joy of her heart, she could have wished her friend to share her happiness.

Then Miss Kennedy explained to her that the velvet and the magnificent silk dresses were for the evening only, while for the morning there were other black silk dresses, with beautiful fur cloaks and things for carriage exercise, and all kinds of things provided, so that she might make a becoming appearance in Portman Square.

‘As for his lordship,’ Miss Kennedy went on, ‘steps have been taken to provide him also with garments due to his position. And I think, Lady Davenant, if I may venture to advise——’

‘My dear,’ said her ladyship simply, ‘just tell me, right away, what I am to do.’

‘Then you are to write to Miss Messenger and tell her that you will be ready to-morrow morning, and say any kind thing that occurs to your kind heart. And then you will have undisturbed possession of the big house in Portman Square, with all its servants, butler, coachman, footmen, and the rest of them, at your orders. And I beg—that is, I hope—that you will make use of them. Remember that a nobleman’s servant expects to be ordered,

not asked. Drive every day; go to the theatres to amuse yourselves—I am sure after all this time you want amusement.’

‘We had lectures at Canaan City,’ said her ladyship; ‘shall we go to lectures?’

‘N—no. I think there are none. But you should go to concerts if you like them, and to picture galleries. Be seen about a good deal; make people talk about you, and do not press your Case before you have been talked about.’

‘Do you think I can persuade Timothy—I mean, his lordship—to go about with me?’

‘You will have the carriage, you know; and if he likes he can sleep at the theatre; you have only to take a private box—but be seen and be talked about.’

This seemed very good advice. Lady Davenant laid it to heart. Then she took off her magnificent velvet and put on the humble stuff again, with a sigh. Happily, it was the last day she would wear it.

On returning to the boarding-house she found her husband in great agitation, for he, too, had been ‘trying on,’ and he had been

told peremptorily that the whole of the existing wardrobe must be abolished, and changed for a new one which had been provided for him. The good old coat, whose sleeves were so shiny, whose skirts so curly, whose cuffs so worn, must be abandoned; the other things which long custom had adapted to every projection of his figure must go too; and, in place of them, the new things which he had just been trying on.

‘There’s a swallow-tail, Clara Martha, for evening wear. I shall have to change my clothes, they tell me, every evening; and frock-coats to button down the front like a congress man in a statue; and—oh! Clara Martha, we are going to have a terrible time!’

‘Courage, my lord,’ she said. ‘The end will reward us. Only hold up your head and remember that you are enjoying the title!’

The evening was rather sad, though the grief of the noble pair at leaving their friends was shared by none but their landlady, who really was attached to the little birdlike woman, so resolute and so full of courage. As for the rest, they behaved as members of a happy

family are expected to behave—that is to say, they paid no heed whatever to the approaching departure of two out of their number, and Josephus leaned his head against the wall, and Daniel Fagg plunged his hands into his hair, and old Mr. Maliphant sat in the corner with his pipe in his mouth and narrated bits of stories to himself, and laughed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

LORD DAVENANT'S GREATNESS.

PROBABLY no greater event had ever happened within the memory of Stepney Green than the arrival of Miss Messenger's carriage to take away the illustrious pair from the boarding-house. Mrs. Bormalack felt, with a pang, when she saw the pair of greys, with the coachman and footman on the box, actually standing before her own door, for all to see, as if she had not thoroughly appreciated the honour of having a peer and his consort residing under her roof, and paying every week for board and lodging the moderate sum of — but she could not bear to put it into words. Now, however, they were going.

His lordship, in his new frock-coat tightly buttoned, stood, looking constrained and stiff, with one hand on the table and the other

thrust into his breast, like a certain well-known statue of Washington. His wife had instructed him to assume this attitude. With him were Daniel Fagg, the Professor, and Harry, the rest of the boarders being engaged in their several occupations. Mrs. Bormalack was putting the final touches to Lady Davenant's morning toilette.

‘If I was a lord,’ said Daniel, ‘I should become a great patron to discoverers. I would publish their works for them.’

‘I will, Mr. Fagg, I will,’ said his lordship; ‘give me time to look around and to see how the dollars come in. Because, gentlemen, as Clara Martha—I mean her ladyship—is not ready yet, there is time for me to explain that I don't quite know what is to happen next, nor where those dollars are to come from unless it is from the Davenant estates. But I don't think, Mr. Fagg, that we shall forget old friends. A man born to a peerage—that is an accident, or the gift of Providence; but to be a Hebrew scholar comes from genius. When a man has been a school-teacher for near upon forty

years, he knows what genius means—and it's skurse, even in Amer'ca.'

'Then, my lord,' said Daniel, producing his note-book, 'I may put your lordship's name down for—— How many copies?'

'Wal, Mr. Fagg, I don't care how many copies you put my name down for, provided you don't ask for payment until the way is clear. I don't suppose they will play it so low on a man as to give him his peerage without a mite of income, even if it has to be raised by a tax on somethin'.'

'American beef will have to be taxed,' said Harry. 'Never fear, my lord, we will pull you through, somehow. As Miss Messenger said, "moral certainty" is a fine card to play, even if the committee of the House of Lords don't recognise the connection.'

The Professor looked guilty, thinking of that 'Roag in Grane,' Saturday Davenant, wheelwright, who went to the American colonies.

Then her ladyship appeared, complete and ready, dressed in her black silk, with a fur cloak and a magnificent muff of sable, stately,

gracious, and happy. After her, Mrs. Bormack, awed. 'I am ready, my lord,' she said, standing in the doorway. 'My friends, we shall not forget those who were hospitable to us and kind in the days of our adversity. Mr. Fagg, you may depend upon us; you have his lordship's permission to dedicate your book to his lordship; we shall sometimes speak of your discovery. The world of fashionable London shall hear of your circles.'

'Triangles, my lady,' said Daniel, bowing.

'I beg your pardon, Mr. Fagg, I ought to have known; and the triangle goes with the fife and the drum in all the militia regiments. Professor, if there is any place in Portman Square where an entertainment can be held, we will remember you. Mr. Goslett—ah! Mr. Goslett—we shall miss *you*, very much. Often and often has my husband said that but for your timely aid he must have broken down. What can we now do for you, Mr. Goslett?'

Nothing could have been more generous than this dispensing of patronage.

'Nothing,' said Harry, 'but I thank you all the same.'

‘Perhaps Miss Messenger wants a cabinet made.’

‘No, no,’ he cried hastily. ‘I don’t want to make cabinets for Miss Messenger. I mend the office stools for the Brewery, and I work for . . . for Miss Kennedy,’ he added, with a blush.

Lady Davenant nodded her head and laughed. So happy was she, that she could even show for the first time an interest in something outside the Case.

‘A handsome couple,’ she said simply. ‘Yes, my dear, go on working for Miss Kennedy, because she is worth it. And now, my lord! Gentlemen, I wish you farewell.’

She made the most stately, the most dignified obeisance, and turned to leave them. But Harry sprang to the front and offered his arm.

‘Permit me, Lady Davenant.’

It was extraordinary enough for the coachman to be ordered to Stepney Green to take up a lord; it was more extraordinary to see that lord’s noble lady falling on the neck of an ordinary female in a black stuff gown and an apron, namely, Mrs. Bormalack, and still more

wonderful to see that noble lady led to the carriage by a young gentleman who seemed to belong to the place.

‘I know him,’ said James the footman, presently.

‘Who is he?’

‘He’s Mr. Le Breton, nephew or something of Lord Jocelyn. I’ve seen him about, and what he’s doing on Stepney Green the Lord only knows.’

‘James!’ said the coachman.

‘John!’ said the footman.

‘When you don’t understand what a young gentleman is a-doin’, what does a man of your experience conclude?’

‘John,’ said the footman, ‘you are right as usual. But I didn’t see her.’

There was a little crowd outside, and it was a proud moment for Lady Davenant when she walked through the lane—which she could have wished a mile long—formed by the spectators, and took her place in the open carriage beneath the great fur rug. His lordship followed with a look of sadness or apprehension rather than triumph. The door was

slammed, the footman mounted the box, and the carriage drove off. One boy called 'Hooray!' and jumped on the curbstone; to him Lord Davenant took off his hat; another turned catherine-wheels along the road, and Lord Davenant took off his hat to him, too, with aristocratic impartiality, till the coachman flicked at him with his whip, and then he ran behind the carriage and used language for a quarter of a mile.

'Timothy,' said her ladyship, 'would that Aurelia Tucker were here to see!'

He only groaned. How could he tell what sufferings in the shape of physical activity might be before him? When would he be able to put up his feet again? One little disappointment marred the complete joy of the departure. It was strange that Miss Kennedy, who had taken so much interest in the business, who had herself tried on the dresses, should not have been there to see. It was not kind of her—who was usually so very kind—to be absent on this important occasion.

They arrived at Portman Square a little before one.

Miss Messenger sent them her compliments by her own maid, and hoped they would be perfectly comfortable in her house, which was placed entirely at their disposal. She was only sorry that absence from town would prevent her from personally receiving Lady Davenant.

The spaciousness of the rooms, the splendour of the furniture, the presence of many servants, awed the simple little American woman. She followed her guide, who offered to show them the house, and led them into all the rooms—the great and splendidly furnished drawing-room, the dining-room, the morning-room, and the library—without saying a word. Her husband walked after her in the deepest dejection, hanging his head and dangling his hands in forgetfulness of the statuesque attitude. He saw no chance whatever for a place of quiet meditation.

Presently they came back to the morning-room. It was a pleasant, sunny room, not so large as the great dining-room, nor so gaunt in its furniture, nor was it hung with immense pictures of game and fruit, but with light and bright water-colours.

‘I should like,’ said her ladyship, hesitating, because she was a little afraid that her dignity demanded that they should use the biggest room of all—‘I should like, if we could, to sit in this room when are alone.’

‘Certainly, my lady.’

‘We are simple people,’ she went on, trying to make it clear why they liked simplicity, ‘and accustomed to a plain way of life, so that his lordship does not look for the splendour that belongs to his position.’

‘No, my lady.’

‘Therefore, if we may use this room mostly—and—and keep the drawing-room for when we have company—’ She looked timidly at the grave young woman who was to be her maid.

‘Certainly, my lady.’

‘As for his lordship,’ she went on, ‘I beg that he may be undisturbed in the morning when he sits in the library. He is much occupied in the morning.’

‘Yes, my lady.’

‘I think I noticed,’ said Lord Davenant, a little more cheerfully, ‘as we walked through

the library, a most beautiful chair.' He cleared his throat, but said no more.

Then they were shown their own rooms, and told that luncheon would be served immediately.

'And I hope, Clara Martha,' said his lordship when they were alone, 'that luncheon in this house means something solid and substantial. Fried oysters, now, with a beefsteak and tomatoes, and a little green corn in the ear, I should like.'

'It will be something, my dear, worthy of our rank. I almost regret, now, that you are a teetotaller. Wine, somehow, seems to belong to a title. Do you think that you could break your vow and take one glass, or even two, of wine, just to show that you are equal to the position?'

'No, Clara Martha,' her husband replied with decision. 'No. I will not break the pledge, not even for a glass of old Bourbon.'

There were no fried oysters at that day's luncheon, nor any green corn in the ear, but it was the best square meal that his lordship had ever sat down to in his life. Yet it was marred

by the presence of an imposing footman, who seemed to be watching to see how much an American could eat. This caused his lordship to drop knives and upset glasses, and went very near to mar the enjoyment of the meal.

After the luncheon he bethought him of the chair in the library and retired there. It was, indeed, a most beautiful chair, low in the seat, broad and deep, not too soft, and there was a footstool. His lordship sat down in this chair beside a large and cheerful fire, put up his feet, and surveyed the room. Books were ranged round all the walls, books from floor to ceiling; there was a large table with many drawers covered with papers, magazines, and reviews, and provided with ink and pens. The door was shut, and there was no sound save of a passing carriage in the square.

‘This,’ said his lordship, ‘seems better than Stepney Green. I wish nephew Nathaniel were here to see.’

With these words upon his lips he fell into a deep slumber.

At half-past three his wife came to wake

him up. She had ordered the carriage, and was ready and eager for another drive along those wonderful streets which she had seen for the first time. She roused him with great difficulty, and persuaded him, not without words of refusal, to come with her. Of course she was perfectly wide awake.

‘This,’ she cried, once more in the carriage, ‘this is London, indeed. Oh! to think that we have wasted months at Stepney, thinking that was town. Timothy, we must wake up; we have a great deal to see and to learn. Look at the shops, look at the carriages. Do tell! It’s *better* than Boston City. Now we have got the carriage, we will go out every day and see something; I’ve told them to drive past the Queen’s Palace, and to show us where the Prince of Wales lives. Before long we shall go there ourselves, of course, with the rest of the nobility. There’s only one thing that troubles me.’

‘What is that, Clara Martha? You air thinkin’, perhaps, that it isn’t in nature for them to keep the dinners every day up to the same pitch of elevation?’

She repressed her indignation at this unworthy suggestion.

‘No, Timothy; and I hope your lordship will remember that in our position we can afford to despise mere considerations of meat and drink, and wherewithal we shall be clothed.’ She spoke as if pure Christianity was impossible beneath their rank, and, indeed, she had never felt so truly virtuous before. ‘No, Timothy, my trouble is that we want to see everything there is to be seen.’

‘That is so, Clara Martha. Let us sit in this luxurious chaise, and see it all. I never get tired o’ settin’, and I like to see things.’

‘But we can only see the things that cost nothing, or the outside of things, because we’ve got no money.’

‘No money at all?’

‘None: only seven shillings, and threepence in coppers.’

This was the dreadful truth. Mrs. Bormalack had been paid, and the seven shillings was all that remained.

‘And, oh, there is so much to see! We’d always intended to run round some day, only

we were too busy with the Case to find the time, and see all the shows we'd heard tell of—the Tower of London and Westminster Abbey, and the Monument and Mr. Spurgeon's Tabernacle—but we never thought things were so grand as this. When we get home we will ask for a guide-book of London, and pick out all the things that are open free.'

That day they drove up and down the streets gazing at the crowds and the shops. When they got home, tea was brought them in the morning-room, and his lordship, who took it for another square meal, requested the loaf to be brought, and did great things with the bread and butter—and having no footman to fear.

At half-past seven a bell rang, and presently Miss Messenger's maid came and whispered that it was the first bell, and would her ladyship go to her own room, and could she be of any help?

Lady Davenant rose at once, looking, however, much surprised. She went to her own room, followed by her husband, too much astonished to ask what the thing meant.

There was a beautiful fire in the room,

which was very large and luxuriously furnished, and lit with gas burning in soft-coloured glass.

‘Nothing could be more delightful,’ said her ladyship, ‘and this room is a picture. But I don’t understand it.’

‘Perhaps it’s the custom,’ said her husband, ‘for the aristocracy to meditate in their bedrooms.’

‘I don’t understand it,’ she repeated. ‘The girl said the *first* bell. What’s the second? They can’t *mean* us to go to bed.’

‘They must,’ said his lordship. ‘Yes, we must go to bed. And there will be no supper to-night. To-morrow, Clara Martha, you must speak about it, and say we’re accustomed to later hours. At nine o’clock or ten we can go with a cheerful heart—after supper. But—well—it looks a soft bed, and I dare say I can sleep in it. You’ve nothing to say, Clara Martha, before I shut my eyes? Because if you have, get it off your mind, so’s not to disturb me afterwards.’

He proceeded to undress in his most leisurely manner, and in ten minutes or so was getting

into bed. Just as his head fell upon the pillows there was a knock at the door.

It was the maid who came to say that she had forgotten to tell her ladyship that dinner was at eight.

‘What?’ cried the poor lady, startled out of her dignity. ‘Do you mean to say that we’ve got to have dinner?’

‘Certainly, my lady;’ this young person was extremely well-behaved, and in presence of her masters and mistresses and superiors knew not the nature of a smile.

‘My!’

Her ladyship standing at the door looked first at the maid without and then at her husband, whose eyes were closed and who was experiencing the first and balmy influences of sweet sleep. She felt so helpless that she threw away her dignity and cast herself upon the lady’s-maid. ‘See now!’ she said, ‘what is your name, my dear?’

‘Campion, my lady.’

‘I suppose you’ve got a Christian name?’

‘I mean that Miss Messenger always calls me Campion.’

‘Well, then, I suppose I must too. We are simple people, Miss Campion, and not long from America, where they do things different, and have dinner at half-past twelve and supper at six. And my husband has gone to bed. What is to be done?’

That a gentleman should suppose bed possible at eight o’clock in the evening was a thing so utterly inconceivable that Campion could for the moment suggest nothing. She only stared. Presently she ventured to suggest that his lordship might get up again.

‘Get up, Timothy, get up this minute!’ Her ladyship shook and pushed him till he opened his eyes, and lifted his head. ‘Don’t stop to ask questions, but get up, right away.’ Then she ran back to the door. ‘Miss Campion!’

‘Yes, my lady.’

‘I don’t mind much about myself, but it might not look well for his lordship not to seem to know things just exactly how they’re done in England. So please don’t tell the servants, Miss Campion.’

She laid her hand on the maid’s arm and

looked so earnest, that the girl felt sorry for her.

‘No, my lady,’ she replied. And she kept her word, so that though the servants’ hall knew how the noble lord and his lady had been brought from Stepney Green, and how his lordship floundered among the plates at lunch, and ate up half a loaf with afternoon tea, they did not know that he went to bed instead of dressing for dinner.

‘And, Miss Champion,’ she was now outside the door, holding it ajar, and the movements of a heavy body hastily putting on clothes could be distinctly heard, ‘you will please tell me, presently, what time they do have things.’

‘Yes, my lady.’

‘Family prayers, now? His lordship will lead, of course, a thing he is quite used to, and can do better than most, having always—’ here she stopped, remembering that there was no absolute necessity to explain the duties of a village schoolmaster.

‘There are no family prayers, my lady, and your ladyship can have dinner or any other meal at any time you please.’

‘His lordship’s times for meals will be those of his brother peers.’

‘Yes, my lady. Breakfast at ten?’

‘Ten will do perfectly.’ It was two hours later than their usual time, and her husband’s sufferings would be very great. Still, everything must give way to the responsibilities of the rank.

‘Will your ladyship take luncheon at half-past one, and tea at half-past five, and dinner at eight?’

‘Yes, now that we know them, these hours will suit me perfectly. We do not in our own country take tea before dinner, but after it. That is nothing, however. And supper?’

‘Your ladyship can have supper whenever you want it,’ replied the maid. She hesitated for a moment and then went on. ‘It is not usual for supper to be served at all.’

‘Oh! then we must go without.’

By this time her husband was dressed, and, obedient to instruction, he had put on his new dress coat, without, however, making any alteration in the rest of his morning garments. The effect, therefore, when they descended to the

drawing-room would have been very startling, but for the fact that there was nobody to see it.

If luncheon was a great meal, dinner was far more magnificent and stately; only there were two footmen instead of one, and his lordship felt that he could not do that justice to the dinner which the dinner deserved, because those two great hulking fellows in livery watched him all the time. After dinner they sat in the great drawing-room, feeling very magnificent and yet uncomfortable.

‘The second dinner,’ said his lordship in a half-whisper, ‘made me feel, Clara Martha, that we did right to leave Canaan City. I never before knew what they really meant by enjoying a title, and I don’t think I ever thoroughly enjoyed it before. The red mullet was beautiful, and the little larks in paper baskets made me feel a Lord all over.’

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE SAME SIGNS.

‘THIS he has done—for love.’

When Angela returned to her dressmakery, it was with these words ringing in her ears, like some refrain which continually returns and will not be silenced.

‘This he has done—for love.’

It was a great deal to do—a great deal to give up ; she fully realised, after her talk with Lord Jocelyn, how much it was that he had given up—at her request. What had she herself done, she asked, in comparison ? She had given money—anybody could give money. She had lived in disguise, under false pretences, for a few months ; but she never intended to go on living in the East End, after she had set her Association on a firm basis. To be sure, she had been drawn on into wider schemes, and

could not retire until these, including the Palace of Delight, were well started. But this young man had given up all, cheerfully, for her sake. Because she was a dressmaker, and lived at Stepney, he would be a workman and live there as well. For her sake he had given up for ever the life of ease and culture, which might have been his, among the gentle-folk to whom he belonged; for her sake he left the man who stood to him *in loco parentis*; for her sake he gave up all the things that are dear to young men, and became a servant. And without a murmur. She watched him going to his work in the morning, cheerful, with the sunshine ever in his face—in fact, sunshine lived there.—his head erect, his eyes fearless, not repenting at all of his choice, perhaps hopeful that in the long run those impediments spoken of might be removed; in that hope he lived. Should that hope be disappointed—what then? Only to have loved, to have sacrificed so much for the sake of love, Angela said to herself, thinking of something she had read, was enough. Then she laughed because this was so silly, and the young man deserved to have some reward.

Then, as a first result of this newly-acquired knowledge, the point of view seemed changed. Quite naturally, after the first surprise at finding so much cultivation in a working-man, she regarded him, like all the rest, from her own elevated platform. In the same way he, from his own elevation, had been, in a sense, looking down upon herself, though she did not suspect the fact. One might pause here, in order to discuss how many kinds of people do consider themselves on a higher level than their neighbours. My own opinion is, that every man thinks himself on so very high a platform as to entitle him to consider the greater part of mankind quite below him; the fact that no one else thinks so has nothing to do with it. Anyone, however, can understand how Angela would at first regard Harry, and Harry the fair dress-maker; further, that, whatever acquaintance or intimacy grew up between them, the first impression would always remain, with the mental attitude of a slight superiority in both minds, so long as the first impression, the first belief as to the real facts, was not removed. Now that it was removed on one side, Angela, for her part,

could no longer look down ; there was no superiority left, except in so far as the daughter of a Whitechapel brewer might consider herself of finer clay than the son of a sergeant in the Army, also of Whitechapel origin.

All for love of her !

The words filled her heart ; they made her cheeks burn and her eyes glow. It seemed so great and noble a thing to do ; so grand a sacrifice to make.

She remembered her words of contempt when, in a shamefaced, hesitating way, as if it was something wrong, he had confessed that he might go back to a life of idleness. Why, she might have known—she ought to have known—that it was not to an ignoble life among ignoble people that he would go. Yet she was so stupid.

What a sacrifice to make ! And all for love of her !

Then the flower of love sprang up and immediately blossomed, and was a beauteous rose, ready for her lover to gather and place upon his heart. But as yet she hardly knew it.

Yet she had known all along that Harry

loved her. He never tried to conceal his passion. ‘Why,’ she said to herself, trying to understand the meaning of the sudden change in herself,—‘Why, it only seemed to amuse me; the thing was absurd; and I felt pity for him, and a little anger because he was so presumptuous; and I was a little embarrassed for fear I had compromised myself with him. But it wasn’t absurd at all; and he loves me, though I have no fortune. Oh! Heaven! I am a she Dives, and he doesn’t know it, and he loves me all the same.’

She was to tell him when the ‘impediments’ were removed. Why, they were removed already. But should she tell him? How could she dare to tell him? No girl likes to do her own wooing; she must be courted; she must be won. Besides—perhaps—but here she smiled—he was not so very much in love, after all. Perhaps he would change; perhaps he would grow tired and go home and desert her; perhaps he would fall in love with someone else. And perhaps Angela, the strong-minded student of Newnham, who would have no love or marriage, or anything of the kind in her

life, was no stronger than any of her sisters at the approach of Love the Unconquered.

She came back the evening after that dinner. Her cheek had a new colour upon it; there was a new smile upon her lips; there was a new softness in her eyes.

‘You look so beautiful this evening,’ said Nelly. ‘Have you been happy while you were away?’

‘I have heard something that has made me happier,’ said Angela. ‘But you, dear Nelly, have not. Why are your cheeks so pale, and what is the meaning of the dark lines under your eyes?’

‘It is nothing,’ the girl replied quickly. ‘I am quite well. I am always well.’ But she was not. She was nervous and preoccupied. There was something on her mind.

Then Harry came, and they began to pass the evening in the usual way, practising their songs, with music, and the little dance, without which the girls could not have gone away happy. And Angela, for the first time, observed a thing which struck a chill to her heart and robbed her of half her joy.

Why had she never before discovered this thing? Ah! ignorant maiden, despite the wisdom of the schools! Hypatia herself was not more ignorant than Angela, who knew not that the chief quality of the rose of love in her heart was to make her read the hearts of others. Armed with this magic power, she saw what she might have seen long before.

In the hasty glance, the quick flush, the nervous trembling of her hands, poor Nelly betrayed her secret. And by those signs the other girl, *who loved the same man*, read that secret.

‘Oh! selfish woman!’ said Angela’s heart. ‘Is your happiness to be bought at such a cost?’

A girl of lower nature might have been jealous. Angela was not. It seemed to her no sin in Nelly that she thought too much of such a man. But she pitied her. Nor did she, as some women might have done, suspect that Harry had trifled with her feelings. She knew that he had not. She had seen them together, day after day; she knew what his bearing had always been towards her, frank, courteous, and

brotherly. He called her by her Christian name; he liked her; her presence was pleasant; she was pretty, sweet, and winning. No; she did not suspect him. And yet, what should she say to the poor girl? how comfort her? how reconcile her to the inevitable sorrow?

‘Nelly,’ she whispered at parting, ‘if you are unhappy, my child, you must tell me what it is.’

‘I cannot,’ Nelly replied. ‘But oh! do not think about me, Miss Kennedy; I am not worth it.’

Perhaps she, too, had read those same signs, and knew what they meant.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

HARRY FINDS LIBERTY.

MENTION has been made of the Stepney Advanced Club, where Dick Coppin thundered, and burning questions were discussed, and debates held on high political points, and where more ideas were submitted and more projects set forth in a single year than in all the rest of London in two years. The members of the Advanced Club were mostly young men, but there was a sprinkling among them of grizzled beards who remembered '48 and the dreams of Chartism. They had got by this time pretty well all they clamoured for in their bygone days, and when they thought of this, and remembered how everything was to go well as soon as the five points of the Charter were carried, and how everything still remained in the same upsydown, topsy-turvy, one-sided,

muddle-headed perverseness, just as if those points had not been carried, they became sad. Nevertheless, the habit of demanding remained, because the reformer is like the daughter of the horse-leech, and still cries for more. Yet they had less confidence than of old in the reformer's great nostrum of destruction. The younger men, of course, were quite sure, absolutely sure, that with a little more upsetting and downpulling the balance would be set right and a beautiful straight level of universal happiness would be reached.

Angela heard, from time to time, of the meetings of this club. Harry told her how his cousin Dick had surpassed himself, how they were going to abolish Crown, Church, and House of Lords, with landlordism, lawyers, established armies, pauperdom, Divesdom, taxes, and all kinds of things which the hateful Tory or that pitiful creature the moderate Liberal considers necessary for the welfare of the State. And she knew that Harry went there and spoke occasionally, and that he had made in a quiet way some sort of mark among the members. One evening, about this time,

she met Dick Coppin returning from his work, in which, unlike his cousin, he did not disclaim the apron nor the box of tools.

‘There’s going to be a debate on Sunday,’ he said, half shyly and half boastfully, ‘at the Club. It’s on the Abolition of the House of Lords. I am going to speak, and if you like to come, you and one or two of the girls, I’ll pass you in, and you will hear a thing or two that will open your eyes.’

‘That is very good of you, Mr. Coppin. I always like to have my eyes opened. Will there be many speakers?’

‘There will be ME,’ he replied with simple grandeur. ‘I don’t think, when I’ve said my say, that there will remain much more to be said by anybody. Cousin Harry may get up, perhaps’—his face assumed a little uneasiness—‘but no, I don’t think he will find any holes in me. I’ve got the facts, I’ve gone to the right quarter to get ’em. No; he can’t deny my facts.’

‘Very well, Mr. Coppin. Perhaps we will go to hear you. But be very sure about your facts.’

Angela said nothing about the proposed debate or her intention of being present, but she learned from Harry that there really was going to be a field night, and that Dick Coppin was expected to come out in more than his usual strength. The informant said nothing about his own intentions. Indeed, he had none, but he was falling into the habit of spending an hour or two at the Club on Sunday evening before finishing off with the girls; sometimes he spoke, but oftener he listened and came away silent and reflective. The Advanced Club offered ample material for one who knows how to reflect. Humanity is a grand subject, and, in fact, is the only subject left for an epic poem. But perhaps the action would drag. Here, Harry saw, was a body of men, old and young, all firmly persuaded that things were wrong, that things might be made better, yet casting about blindly for a remedy and crying aloud for a leader. And those who desired to lead them had nothing to offer but a stone instead of bread. The fact that this young man did listen and reflect shows how greatly he was changed from him whom we

first met in the Prologue. Regular hours, simple living, reasonably hard work, strengthened his nerves for anything; he was harder; the men with whom he talked were rougher, and the old carelessness was gone. He kept his gaiety of heart, yet it was sobered; he felt responsible; he knew so much more than the men around him, that he felt a consuming desire to set them right, but could not, for he was tongue-tied; he had not yet found liberty, as the old preachers used to say; when he felt most strongly that the speakers were on a false tack, he spoke most feebly; he wanted to be a Prophet, and there were only confused ideas, blurred perceptions to work upon. Now, the first step towards being a Prophet—which is a most laudable ambition—is to see quite clearly oneself and to understand what one means. He could set a man right as to facts; he could shut up a speaker and make the Club laugh, but he could not move them. As yet Harry was only in the position occupied during a long life by the late Prophet of Chelsea, inasmuch as he distinctly perceived the folly of his neighbours, but could teach no way of wisdom. This

is a form of prophetic utterance which has never possessed much weight with the people; they want direct teaching, and a leader who knows what he means and whither he would conduct them, if it be only in the direction of one of those poor old worn-out panaceas once warranted to guarantee universal happiness, like the ballot-box. Not that Harry grew miserable over his failure to prophesy, not at all; he only wished for words of wisdom and power, and sat meanwhile with his hands in his pockets and his hat pulled over his eyes, like a Minister in the House of Commons, while the members of the Club poured forth their frothy declamation, each louder than his predecessor, trying to catch the applause of an assembly which generally shouted for the loudest. The times might be out of joint, but Harry felt no certain inspiration as to the way of setting them right; if a thing came to him, he would say it; if not, he would wait. The great secret about waiting is that while a man waits he thinks, and if he thinks in solitude and waits long enough, letting words lie in his brain and listening to ideas which come upon

him, sometimes singly and slowly, sometimes in crowds like the fancies of a wakeful night, there presents itself an idea at last which seizes upon him and holds him captive, and works itself out in his brain while he mechanically goes on with the work, the rest, the toil, and the pleasure of his daily life. Solitary work is favourable to meditation; therefore, while Harry was shaping things at his lathe, undisturbed by any one, his brain was at work. And a thought came to him which lay there dimly perceived at first, but growing larger daily till it filled his head and drew unto itself all his other thoughts, so that everything he saw, or read, or heard, or meditated upon, became like a rill or rivulet which goes to swell a great river. And it was this thought, grown into shape at last, which he proclaimed to the members of the Advanced Club on the night of their great debate.

It was not a large Hall, but it was perfectly filled with people; chiefly they were men and young men, but among them were a good many women and girls. Does it ever occur to the 'better class' that the work of woman's

emancipation is advancing in certain circles with rapid strides? That is so, nevertheless; and large, if not pleasant, results may be expected in a few years therefrom. It must be remembered that for the most part they start perfectly free from any trammels of religion. It has been stated that the basis of all their philosophy is, and always will be, the axiom that every one must get as much as possible for herself out of the rather limited rations of Pleasure supplied to Humanity. Whether that is true I know not. Angela watched these women with curiosity; they were mostly young and some of them were pretty, and there was absolutely nothing to show that they thought differently from any other women. Some of them had brought their work; some were talking; they were not excited by the prospect of the coming debate; they expected, in fact, nothing more than they had already heard over and over again. There was too much gas, the atmosphere was already heavy and the walls already shiny, before the meeting began. On the platform was a chair for the chairman, with a table and a hammer and a decanter of

water and a glass. Angela sat far back against the door, with Captain Sorensen and Nelly. She was silent, wondering at these people and why they should trouble themselves about the House of Lords, and whether they never felt any desire at all for the religion which brings joy and happiness to so many suffering lives. Presently she saw Harry walk slowly up the middle aisle and take a place, for there was no chair, on the steps which led to the platform. She was so far back that he could not see her, for which afterwards she was glad.

The chairman, a man stricken in years, with grey hair and a grizzled beard, and one of those ex-Chartists of whom we have spoken, took the chair, hammered the table, and opened the debate. He was a man of great reputation, having been all his life an Irreconcilable, and he was suspected of being a Socialist, and was certainly a Red Republican. He began in the usual way by stating as an axiom that the People can do no wrong; that to entrust the destinies of a Nation to the People is to ensure its greatness; that Man-

hood is the only rank:—and so forth, all in capital letters with notes of admiration. The words were strong, but they produced no effect, because the speech had been made before a great many times, and the people knew it by heart. Therefore, though it was the right thing to say, and the thing expected of a chairman, nobody paid any attention.

The Discussion, which was all one-sided, then began. Two or three young men rose one after the other; they were listened to with the indulgence which is always accorded to beginners. None of them made a point, or said a good thing, or went outside the crude theories of untaught, if generous, youth; and their ignorance was such as to make Angela almost weep.

Then Dick Coppin mounted the platform, and advanced amid the plaudits of the expectant audience. He ran his fingers through his coarse black hair, straightened himself up to his full height of five feet six, drank a little water, and then, standing beside the chairman's table, with his right hand resting upon it, when he was not waving it about, he began,

slowly at first, but afterwards with fluent speech and strong words and a ringing voice, the harangue which he had so carefully prepared. Of course he condemned the House of Lords tooth and nail; it must be destroyed root and branch; it was a standing insult to the common sense of the nation; it was an effete and worn-out institution, against which the enlightenment of the age cried out aloud; it was an obstruction to Progress; it was a menace to the People; it was a thing of the Past; it was an enemy of the working-man; it was a tyrant who had the will but not the power to tyrannise any longer; it was a toothless old wolf who could bark but could not bite. Those free and enlightened men sitting before him, members of the Advanced Club, had pronounced its doom—therefore it must go. The time had come when the nation would endure no longer to have a privileged class, and would be mocked no more by the ridiculous spectacle of hereditary legislators.

He pursued this topic with great freedom of language and a great natural eloquence of

a rough and uncultivated kind ; his hearers, getting gradually warmed, interrupted him by those plaudits which go straight to the heart of the born orator, and stir him to his strongest and his best.

Then he changed his line and attempted to show that the families which compose the Upper House are themselves, as well as their Institution, worn out, used up, and lost to the vigour which first pushed them to the front. Where were now their fighting men ? he asked. Where were their orators ? Which among them all was of any real importance to his Party ? Which of them had in modern times done anything, proposed anything, or thought of anything for the advancement of knowledge, or the good of the people ? Not one able man, he said, among them ; luxury had ruined and corrupted all ; their blood was poisoned ; they could drink and eat ; they could practise other luxurious habits, which he enumerated with fidelity, lest there should be any mistake about the matter ; and then they could go to the House, reeling into it drunk with wine, and oppose the Will of the People.

Then he turned from generalities to particulars, and entertained his audience with anecdotes gleaned, Heaven knows how, from the private histories of many noble families, tending to show the corruption into which the British Aristocracy had fallen. These anecdotes were received with that keenness which always awaits stories which show how wicked other people are, and what are the newest fashions and hitherto unknown forms of vice. Angela marvelled, on her part, to hear 'Scandal about Queen Elizabeth' at Stepney.

Then, after an impeachment which lasted for half an hour, he thundered forth an appeal—not at all novel to his hearers, yet still effective, because his voice was like a trumpet—to the men before him to rise in their millions, their majesty, and their might, and to tear the accursed thing down.

He sat down, at last, wiping his forehead and exhausted, but triumphant. Never before had he so completely carried his audience with him; never before had he obtained such flow of language, and such mastery over his voice; never before had he realised so fully that he

was, he himself, an orator inferior to none. As he sat down, while the men clapped their hands and cheered, a vision of greatness passed before his mind. He would be the Leader of the People; they should look to him as they had never yet looked to any man for guidance. And he would lead them. Whither? But this, in the dream of the moment, mattered nothing.

A cold chill came over him as he saw his cousin Harry leap lightly to the platform and take his place at the table. For he foresaw trouble; and all the more because those of the audience who knew Gentleman Jack laughed in expectation of that trouble. Fickle and fleeting is the breath of popular favour; only a moment before, and they were cheering him to the skies; now they laughed because they hoped he was to be made to look a fool. But the orator took heart, considering that his facts were undeniable.

When the tumult had subsided, Harry, to everybody's astonishment, laid his hand upon his cousin's shoulder—a gesture of approbation—and looked round the room and said quietly, but loud enough to be heard by all:

‘My cousin, Dick Coppin, can talk. That was a very good speech of his, wasn’t it?’

Voices were heard asking if he could better it.

‘No,’ Harry replied, ‘I can’t. I wish I could.’ He took his place beside the table, and gazed for a few moments at the faces below him. Angela observed that his face was pale, though the carriage of his head was brave. ‘I wish,’ he repeated, ‘that I could. Because, after all these fireworks, it is such a tame thing just to tell you that there wasn’t a word of sense in the whole speech.’

Here there were signs of wrath, but the general feeling was to let the speaker have his say.

‘Do you suppose—any of you—that Dick believes that the Lords go rolling drunk to the House? Of course he doesn’t. Do you suppose that he thinks you such fools as to believe it? Of course he doesn’t. But then, you see, Dick must have his fireworks. And it was a first-rate speech. Do you suppose he believes that the Lords are a worn-out lot? Not he. He knows better. And if any of you feel in-

clined to think so, go and look at them. You will find them as well set up as most, and better. You can hear some of them in the House of Commons, where you send them, you electors. Wherever there are Englishmen working, fighting, or sporting, there are some of those families among them. As for their corruption, that's fireworks too. Dick has told you some beautiful stories which he challenged anybody to dispute. I dare say they are all true. What he forgot to tell you is that he has picked out these stories from the last hundred and fifty years, and expects you to believe that they all happened yesterday. Shall we charge you members of the Club with all the crimes of the Whitechapel Road for a hundred years? If you want to upset the House of Lords, go and do it. But don't do it with lies on your lips, and on false pretences. You know how virtuous and moral you are yourselves. Then just remember that the members of the House of Lords are about as moral as you are, or rather better. Abolish the House of Lords, if you like. How much better will you be when it is gone? You can go on abolishing. There

is the Church. Get it disestablished. Think how much better you will all be when the churches are pulled down. Yet you couldn't stay away any more then than you do. You want the Land Laws reformed. Get them reformed, and think how much land you will get for yourselves out of that Reform.

‘ Dick Coppin says you have got the Power. So you have. He says the last Reform Bill gave it to you. There he makes a mistake. You have always had the Power. You have always had all the Power there is. It is yours, because you are the people, and what the people want they will have. Your Power is your birthright. You are an irresistible giant who has only to roar in order to get what he wants.

‘ Well, why don't you roar? Because you don't know what you do want. Because your leaders don't know, any more than yourselves ; because they go bawling for things which will do you no good, and they don't know what it is you do want.

‘ You think that by making yourselves into Clubs and calling yourselves Radicals, you are getting forward. You think that

by listening to a chap like my cousin Dick, who's a clever fellow and a devil for fireworks, you somehow improve your own condition. Did you ever ask yourselves what difference the form of Government makes? I have been in America, where, if anywhere, the people have it their own way. Do you think work is more plentiful, wages better, hours shorter, things cheaper in a Republic? Do you think the heels of your boots last any longer? If you do, think so no longer. Whether the House of Lords, or the Church, or the Land Laws stand or fall, that, my friends, makes not the difference of a penny piece to any single man among us. You who agitate for their destruction are generously giving your time and trouble for things which help no man. And yet there are so many things that can help us.

‘It comes of your cursed ignorance’—Harry was warming up—‘I say, your cursed ignorance. You know nothing: you understand nothing: of your own country. You do not know how its institutions have grown up: why it is so prosperous: why changes, when they have to be made, should be made slowly, and

not before they are necessary; nor how you yourselves may climb up, if you will, into a life above you, much happier, much more pleasant. You do not respect the old institutions, because you don't know them; you desire new things because you don't understand the old. Go—learn—make your orators learn and make them teach you. And then send them to the House of Commons to represent you.

‘You think that Governments can do everything for you. You FOOLS! Has any Government ever done anything for you? Has it raised your wages? Has it shortened your hours? Can it protect you against rogues and adulterators? Will it ever try to better your position! Never: never: never. Because it cannot. Does any Government ask what you want, what you ought to want? No. Can it give you what you want? No.

‘Listen. You want clean streets and houses in which decent folk can live. The Government has appointed sanitary officers. Yet, look about you: put your heads in the courts of Whitechapel—what has the sanitary officer done? You want strong and well-built houses.

There are Government inspectors. Yet, look at the lath-and-plaster houses that a child could kick over. You want honest food. All that you eat and drink is adulterated. How does the Government help you there?

‘ You have the Power—all the Power there is ; you cannot use it because you don’t know how. You expect the Government to use your Power—to do your work. My friends, I will tell you the secret—whatever you want done you *must do for yourselves*—no one else will do it for you. You must agree that such and such shall be done, and then be very sure, you will get it done.

‘ In politics you are used as the counters of a game, each side plays with you : not for you, mind. You get nothing, whichever side is in : you are the pawns.

‘ It is something, perhaps, to take even so much part in the game ; but as you get nothing but the honour, I am rather surprised at your going on with it. And if I might advise, it would be that we give that game over and play one by ourselves in which there really is something to be got.

‘What we must play for is what we want. What we have got to do is to remember that when we say we will have a thing, nobody can resist us. Have it we must, because we are the masters.

‘Now, then, what do we want?’

Harry was quite serious by this time, and so were the faces of those who listened, though there was a little angry doubt on some of them. No one replied to the question. Some of the younger men looked as if they might perhaps have answered in the words of the sailor, ‘more rum.’ But they refrained, and preserved silence.

‘What do we want? Has any one of you ever considered what you do want? Let me tell you a few things—I can’t think of many, but I know a few that you ought to put first.

‘You want your own local Government. What every little country town has, you have not. You want to elect your own Aldermen, Mayors, Guardians, and School Boards, yourselves—by yourselves. Get that first, and abolish the House of Lords afterwards.

‘There is your food. You ought to get

your beef from America at threepence a pound, and you are contented to give a shilling; you ought to have your fish at twopence a pound, and you pay whatever they choose to charge you; you drink bad beer, bad spirits, bad tea, bad cocoa, bad coffee—because you don't know that the things are bad and dear, and because you don't understand that you have only got to resolve in order to get all this changed. It is, you see, your cursed ignorance.

‘There are your houses. The rich people, having more knowledge than you, and more determination, have found out how to build houses so as to prevent fevers. You live in houses built to catch fever—fever-traps. When you find out what you want, you will refuse to live in such houses; you will refuse to let anybody live in such houses; you will come out of them; you will have them pulled down. When it comes to building up better houses, you will remember that paid inspectors are squared by the builders, so that the cement is mud and sand, and the bricks are crumbling clay, and the walls crack, and the floors are

shaky. Therefore, you will be your own inspectors.

‘The Government makes us send our children to Board Schools to be educated. That would be very noble of the Government if they at first considered, which nobody has, what sort of education a working-man wants. As yet they have only got as far as spelling. When a boy can spell, they think he is educated. Once it was all Kings of Israel; now it is all spelling. Is that what you want? Do you think it matters how you spell, so that you *know*? Are you contented that your children shall know nothing about this great country, nothing of its wealth and people, nothing of their duties as citizens, nothing of their own trade? Shall they not be taught that theirs is the Power, that they can do what they like and have what they like—if they like? Do you resolve that the education of your children shall be real, and it will become real. But don’t look to Government to do it, or it will continue to be Spelling. Find out the thing that you want, and send your own men to the School Boards to get that thing done.

‘Another thing that you want is Pleasure. Men can’t do without it. Can Government give you that? They can shut the public-houses at twelve. What more can they do? But you—you do not know how to enjoy yourselves. You don’t know what to do. You can’t play music, nor sing, nor paint, nor dance: you can do nothing. You get no pleasure out of life, and you won’t get it, even by abolishing everything.

‘Take that simple question of a holiday. We take ours, like the fools we are, all in droves, by thousands and millions, on Bank holidays. Why do we do that? Why do we not insist on having our holidays at different times in the year, without these monstrous crowds which render enjoyment impossible? And why do we not demand—what is granted to every little quill-driving clerk in the City—our fortnight every year, with nothing to do and *drawing full pay*? That is one of your wants, and you don’t know it. The reform of the Land Laws, my brothers, will not bring you one inch nearer getting this want.’

At this point the chairman nodded his head

approvingly. Perhaps he had never before realised how all his life he had neglected the substance and swallowed the shadow. The old man sat listening patiently with his head in his hands. Never before had any workman, anyone of his own class, spoken like this young fellow, who talked and looked like a swell, though they knew him for what he was. Pleasure! Yes: he had never considered that life might have its delights. Yet, what delights?

‘There’s another thing, and the blackest of all.’ Harry paused a moment. But the men were listening, and now in earnest.

‘I mean the treatment of your girls, your sisters and your daughters. Men! You have combined together and made your Unions for yourselves. You have forced upon your employers terms which nothing but combination would have compelled them to accept; you are paid twice what you received twenty years ago; you go in broadcloth; you are well fed; you have money in your pocket. But you have clean forgotten the girls.

‘Think of the girls!

‘They have no protection but a Government Act, forbidding more than ten hours’ work. Who cares for a Government Act? It is defied daily; those who frame these Acts know very well that they are powerless to maintain them. Because, my friends, the Power is with the People—you. If you resolve that an Act shall become a law, you make it so. Everything, in the end, is by the people and through the people.

‘You have done nothing for your girls. You leave them’ to the mercies of employers who have got to cut down expenses to the last farthing. They are paid starvation wages; they are kept in unwholesome rooms; they are bound to the longest hours; they are oppressed with fines. The girls grow up narrow-chested, stooping, consumptive. They are used up wholesale. And what do you do for them? Nothing. There are girls and women in this hall. Can any one of them here get up and say that the working men have raised a finger for them?

‘The worst charge any man can bring against you is that you care nothing for your girls.

‘Why, it is only the other day that a Dress-makers’ Association has been opened among you. You all know where it is; you all know what it tries to do for the girls; yet, what single man among you has ever had the pluck to stand up for his sisters who are working in it?’

Then Harry stepped right to the edge of the platform and spread out his hands, changing his voice.

‘You are good fellows,’ he said, ‘and you’ve given me fair play. There isn’t a country in the world except England where I could have had this fair play. Don’t misunderstand me. I tell you, and I don’t think you knew it before, that the time has come when the people should leave off caring much about the Government or expecting any good thing for themselves from any Government, because it can’t be done in that way. You must find out for yourselves what you want, and then you must have that done. You must combine for these things as you did for wages, and you will get them. And if you spend half the energy in working for yourselves that you have spent in

working for things that do you no good, you will be happy indeed.

‘Your Politics — I say again — will do nothing for you. Do you hear—**NOTHING AT ALL.** But yours is the Power. Let us repeat it again and again: all the Power is yours. Try what Government can do. Send Dick Coppin into Parliament—he’s a clever chap—and tell him to do what he can for you. He will do nothing. Therefore, work for your selves, and by yourselves. Make out what you want, and resolve to have it. Nobody can prevent you. The world is yours to do what you like with. Here in England, as in America, the working man is master, provided the working man knows what he wants. The first thing you want, I reckon, is good lodging; the second is good food; the third is good drink—good unadulterated beer, and plenty of it; the fourth is good and sensible education; the fifth is holiday and pleasure; and the last, which is also the first, is justice for your girls. But don’t be Fools. I have been among you in this Club a good many times. It goes to my heart every time I come to see so many

clever men, and able men, wasting their time over grievances which don't hurt them, when they are surrounded by a hundred grievances which they have only to perceive, in order to sweep them away. I am a Radical, like yourselves, but I am a Social Radical. As for your political Jaw, it plays the game of those who use you: Politics is a game of lying accusations and impossible promises: the accusations make you angry: the promises make you hopeful. But you get nothing in the long run, and you never will: because, promise what they may, it is not laws or measures that will improve our lot: it is by our own resolution that it shall be improved. Hold out your hands and take the things that are offered you. Everything is yours if you like to have it. You are in a beautiful garden filled with fruits, if you care to pick them, but you do not: you lie grubbing in the mud and crying out for what will do you no good. Voices are calling to you: they offer you such a life as was never yet conceived by the lordliest House of Lords, a life full of work and full of pleasure; but you don't hear: you are deaf: you are blind;

you are ignorant.' He stopped—a hoarse shout greeted his peroration—Harry wondered for a moment if this was applause or disapproval. It was the former. Then one man rose and spoke.

'Damn him!' he cried. Yet the phrase was used in no condemnatory spirit—as when a mother addresses her boy as a naughty little rogue-pogue. 'Damn him! He shall be our next member.'

'No,' said Harry, clapping his cousin on the shoulder, 'here is your next member, Dick Coppin is your boy. He is clever: he is ambitious: tell him what you want, and he'll get it for you if any one can. But—oh! men—find out what you want: and have it. Yours — yours — yours is the Power—you are the masters of the world. Leave the humbug of Radicalism and Liberalism and Toryism. Let dead politics bury their dead. Learn to look after your own interests. You are the Kings and Lords of humanity: the old Kings and Lords are no more: they are swept away: they are only shadows of the past. With you are the sceptre and the crown: you

sit upon the throne : and when you know how to reign, you shall reign as never yet king was known to reign. *But first, find out what you want.*'

He lightly leapt from the platform, and stepped down the hall. He had said his say, and was going. The men laughed and shouted, half angry, half pleased, but wholly astonished. And Dick Coppin, with a burning cheek, sat humiliated, yet proud of his cousin.

At the door Harry met Miss Kennedy with Captain Sorensen and Nelly.

'We have heard your speech,' said Angela, with brightened eyes and glowing cheeks. 'Oh! what did I tell you? You can speak, you can persuade—you can lead. What a career—what a career—lies before the man who can persuade and lead!'

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE FIGUREHEADS.

It was Sunday morning, after breakfast, and Harry was sitting in the boarding-house common room, silently contemplating his two fellow-boarders, Josephus and Mr. Maliphant. The circle at Bormalack's was greatly broken up. Not to speak of the loss of the illustrious pair, Daniel Fagg had now taken to live entirely among the dressmakers, except in the evenings, when their music and dancing drove him away; in fact, he regarded the place as his own, and had so far forgotten that he took his meals there by invitation, as to criticise the dinners, which were always good, although plain, and to find fault with the beer, which came from Messenger's. Miss Kennedy, too, only slept at the boarding-house, though by singular forgetfulness she always paid the land-

lady every Saturday morning in advance for a week's board and lodging. Therefore Josephus and the old man for the most part sat in the room alone, and were excellent company, because the ill-used junior clerk never wanted to talk with anybody, and the aged carver of figureheads never wanted a listener.

Almost for the first time, Harry considered this old man, the rememberer of fag ends and middlebits of anecdote, with something more than a passing curiosity and a sense of irritation caused by the incongruity of the creature. You know that whenever you seriously address yourself to the study of a person, however insignificant in appearance, that person assumes an importance equal to that of any lord. A person, you see, is an individual, or an indivisible thing. Wherefore, let us not despise our neighbour. The ancient Mr. Maliphant was a little, thin old man, with a few grey hairs left, but not many; his face was enwrapped, so to speak, in a pair of very high collars, and he wore a black silk stock, not very rusty, for he had been in the reign of the fourth George a dapper young fellow, and possessed a taste in

dress beyond the lights of Limehouse. But this was in his nautical days, and before he developed his natural genius for carving ships' figureheads. He had no teeth left, and their absence greatly shortened the space between nose and chin, which produced an odd effect; he was closely shaven; his face was covered all over like an ocean with innumerable wrinkles, crowsfeet, dimples, furrows, valleys, and winding watercourses, which showed like the universal smile of an accurate map. His forehead, when the original thatch was thick, must have been rather low and weak; his eyes were still bright and blue, though they wandered while he talked: when he was silent they had a far-off look; his eyebrows, as often happens with old men, had grown bushy and were joined across the bridge; when his memory failed him, which was frequently the case, they frowned almost as terribly as those of Daniel Fagg; his figure was spare and his legs thin, and he sat on one side of the chair with his feet twisted beneath it; he never did anything, except to smoke one pipe at night; he never took the least notice of anybody; when he

talked, he addressed the whole company, not any individual; and he was affected by no man's happiness or suffering. He had lived so long that he had no more sympathy left; the world was nothing more to him; he had no further interest in it; he had gone beyond it and out of it; he was so old that he had not a friend left, who knew him when he was young; he lived apart; he was, perforce, a hermit.

Harry remembered, looking upon this survival, that the old man had once betrayed a knowledge of his father and of the early history of the Coppin and Messenger families. He wondered now why he had not tried to get more out of him. It would be a family chronicle of small beer, but there could be nothing, probably, very disagreeable to learn about the career of the late sergeant, his father, nor anything painful about the course of the Coppins. On this Sunday morning, when the old man looked as if the cares of the week were off his mind, his memory should be fresh—clearer than on a week-day.

In the happy family of boarders, none of whom pretended to take the least interest in

each other, nobody ever spoke to Mr. Maliphant, and nobody listened when he spoke : nobody, except Mrs. Bormalack, who was bound by rules of politeness, took the least notice of his coming or of his going ; nobody knew how he lived or what he paid for his board and lodging, or anything else about him. Once, it was certain, he had been in the mercantile marine. Now he had a ‘yard’; he went to this yard every day ; it was rumoured that in this yard he carved figureheads all day for large sums of money ; he came home in the evening in time for supper ; a fragrance, as of rum and water, generally accompanied him at that time ; and after a pipe and a little more grog, and a few reminiscences chopped up in bits and addressed to the room at large, the old fellow would retire for the night. A perfectly cheerful and harmless old man, yet not companionable.

‘ Did you know my father, Mr. Maliphant ? ’ asked Harry, by way of opening up the conversation. ‘ He was a sergeant, you know, in the army.’

Mr. Maliphant started and looked be-

wildered: he had been, in imagination, somewhere off Cape Horn, and he could not get back at a moment's notice. It irritated him to have to leave his old friends.

'Your father, young gentleman?' he asked in a vexed and trembling quaver. 'Did I know your father? Pray, sir, how am I to know that you ever had a father?'

'You said, the other day, that you did. Think again. My father, you know, married Caroline Coppin.'

'Ay, ay—Caroline Coppin—I remember Caroline Coppin. Oh! Yes, sister she was to Bob—when Bob was third mate of a East Indiaman; a devil of a fellow was Bob, though but a boy, and if living now, which I much misdoubt, would be but sixty or thereabouts. Everybody, young man, knew Bob Coppin,' . . . here he relapsed into silence. When he spoke again, he carried on aloud the subject of his thoughts—'below he did his duty. Such a man, sir, was Bob Coppin.'

'Thank you, Mr. Maliphan. I seem to know Bob quite well from your description. And now he's gone aloft, hasn't he? And

when the word comes to pass all hands, there will be Bob with a hitch of his trousers and a kick of the left leg. But about my mother ? ’

‘ Young gentleman, how am I to know that you were born with a mother ? Law ! law ! One might as well—’ here his voice dropped again and he finished the sentence with the silent motion of his lips.

‘ Caroline Coppin, you know ; your old friend.’

He shook his head.

‘ No, oh ! no. I knew her when she was as high as that table. My young friend, not my old friend, she was. How could she be my old friend ? She married Sergeant Goslett, and he went out to India and—and—something happened there. Perhaps he was cast away. A many get cast away in those seas.’

‘ Is that all you remember about her ? ’

‘ I can remember,’ said the old man, ‘ a wonderful lot of things at times. You mustn’t ask any man to remember all at once. Not at his best, you mustn’t, and I doubt I am hardly at what you may call my tip-top ripest—yet. Wait a bit, young man ; wait a bit. I’ve been

to a many ports and carved figureheads for a many ships, and they got cast away, one after the other, but dear to memory still, and paid for. Like Sergeant Goslett. A handsome man he was, with curly brown hair, like yours, young gentleman. I remember how he sang a song in this very house when Caroline—or was it her sister?—had it, and I forget whether it was before Bunker married her sister or after Caroline's baby was born, which was when the child's father was dead. A beautiful evening, we had.'

Caroline's baby, Harry surmised, was himself.

'Where was Caroline's baby born?' Harry asked.

'Where should he be? Why, o' course, in his mother's own house.'

'Why should he be born in his mother's own house? I did not know that his mother had a house.'

The old man looked at him with pity.

'Young man,' he said, 'you know nothing. Your ignorance is shameful.'

'But why?'

‘Enough said, young gentleman,’ replied Mr. Maliphant with dignity. ‘Enough said : youth should not sport with age : it doth not become grey hairs to—to—’

He did not finish the sentence, except to himself, but what he did say was something emphatic and improving, because he shook his head a good deal over it.

Presently he got up and left the room. Harry watched him getting his hat and tying his muffler about his neck. When things were quite adjusted the old man feebly tottered down the steps. Harry took his hat and followed him.

‘May I walk with you, sir?’ he asked.

‘Surely, surely!’ Mr. Maliphant was surprised; ‘it is an unusual thing for me to have a companion. Formerly, they came—ah!—all the way from Rotherhithe to—to—sing and drink with me.’

‘Will you take my arm?’ Harry asked.

The little old man, who wore black trousers and a dress coat out of respect to the day, but, although the month was December, no great-coat—in fact, he had never worn a great-coat

in all his life—was trotting along with steps which showed weakness but manifest intention. Harry wondered where he meant to go. He took the proffered arm, however, and seemed to get on better for the support.

‘Are you going to church, sir?’ asked Harry, when they came opposite the good old church of Stepney, with its vast acres of dead men, and heard the bells ringing.

‘No, young gentleman, no, certainly not. I have more important business to look after.’

He quickened his steps, and they left the church behind them.

‘Church?’ repeated Mr. Maliphant with severity. ‘When there’s Property to look after, the bells may ring as loud as they please. Church is good for paupers and churchwardens. Where would the Property be, do you think, if I were not on the spot every day to protect it?’

He turned off the High Street into a short street of small houses, neither better nor worse than the thousands of houses around: it was a cul-de-sac, and ended in a high brick wall with a large gateway in the middle and square stone

pillars and a ponderous pair of wooden gates, iron bound, as if they guarded things of the greatest value. There was also a small wicket beside it, which the old man carefully unlocked and opened, looking round to see that no burglars followed.

Harry saw, within, a tolerably large yard, in the middle of which was a little house of one room. The house was a most wonderful structure ; it was built apparently of packing-cases nailed on four or eight square posts : it was furnished with a door, a window, and a chimney, all complete ; it was exactly like a doll's house, only that it was rather larger, being at least six feet high and eight feet square. The house was painted green ; the roof was painted red ; the door blue ; there was also a brass knocker ; so that in other respects it was like a doll's house.

‘Aha!’ cried the old man, rubbing his hands and pointing to the house. ‘I built it, young man. That is my own house, that is ; I laid the foundations ; I put up the walls ; I painted it. And I very well remember when it was. Let me see : Mr. Messenger, who was a younger man than me by four years, married

in that year, or lost his son—I forget which,’ his voice lowered, and he went on talking to himself—‘ Caroline’s grandfather went bankrupt in the building trade ; or her father, perhaps, who afterwards made money and left houses. And here I am still. This is my Property, young gentleman, and I come here every day to execute orders. Oh ! yes,’—he looked about him in a kind of mild doubt—‘ I execute orders. Perhaps the orders don’t come in so thick as they did. But here I am—ready for work—always ready, and I see my old friends too, aha ! They come as thick as ever, bless you, if the orders don’t. Quite a gathering in here, some days.’ Harry shuddered, thinking who these old friends might be. ‘ Sundays and all I come here, and they come too. A merry company ! ’

The garrulous old man opened the door of the little house. Harry saw that it contained a cupboard with some simple cooking utensils, and a fireplace, where the proprietor began to make a fire, and one chair, and a little table, and a rack with tools ; there were also one or two pipes and a tobacco jar.

He looked about the yard. A strange place, indeed! It was adorned or rather furnished with great ships' figureheads, carved in wood, standing in rows and circles, some complete, some half-finished, some just begun; so that here was a Lively Peggy with rudimentary features just emerging from her native wood, and here a saucy Sal of Wapping still clothed in oak up to her waist; and here a Neptune, his crowned head only as yet indicated, though the weather-beaten appearance of his wood showed that the time was long since he was begun; or a Father Thames, his god-like face as yet showing like a blurred dream. Or there were finished and perfect heads, painted and gilded, waiting for the purchaser who never came. They stood or sat—whichever a head and shoulder can be said to do—with so much pride, each so rejoicing in himself, and so disdainful of his neighbour, in so haughty a silence, that they seemed human and belonging to the first circles of Stepney; Harry thought, too, that they eyed him curiously, as if he might be the long-expected shipowner come to buy a figurehead.

‘Here is Property, young man!’ cried the old man; he had lit his fire now and came to the door, craning forward and spreading his hands. ‘Look at the beauties. There’s truth! There’s expression! Mine, young man, all mine. Hundreds—thousands of pounds here, to be protected.’

‘Do you come here every day?’ Harry asked.

‘Every day. The Property must be looked after.’

‘And do you sit here all day, by yourself?’

‘Why, who else should I sit with? And a man like me never sits alone. Bless your heart, young gentleman, of a morning, when I sit before the fire and smoke a pipe, this room gets full o’ people. They crowd in, they do. Dead people, I mean, of course. I know more dead men than living. They’re the best company, after all. Bob Coppin comes, for one.’

Harry began to look about, wondering whether the ghost of Bob might suddenly appear at the door. On the whole, he envied the old man his company of departed friends.

‘So you talk,’ he said; ‘you and the dead

people.' By this time the old man had got into his chair, and Harry stood in the doorway, for there really was not room for more than one in the house at the same time, to say nothing of inconveniencing and crowding the merry company of ghosts.

'You wouldn't believe,' said the old man, 'the talks we have nor the yarns we spin, when we're here together.'

'It must be a jovial time,' said Harry. 'Do they drink?'

Mr. Maliphant screwed up his lips and shook his head mysteriously.

'Not of a morning,' he replied, as if in the evening the old rollicking customs were still kept up.

'And you talk about old times—eh?'

'There's nothing else to talk about, as I know.'

'Certainly not. Sometimes you talk about my—about Caroline Coppin's father, I suppose. I mean the one who made money, not the one who went bankrupt.'

'Houses,' said Mr. Maliphant; 'houses it was.'

‘Oh!’

‘Twelve houses there were, all his own. Two sons and two daughters to divide among. Bob Coppin sold his at once—Bunker bought ’em—and we drank up the money down Poplar way, him and me and a few friends together in a friendly and comfortable spirit. A fine time we had, I remember. Jack Coppin was in his father’s trade, and he lost his money; speculated, he did. Builders are a believin’ people. Bunker got his houses, too.’

‘Jack was my cousin Dick’s father, I suppose,’ said Harry. ‘Go ahead, old boy. The family history is reeling out beautifully. Where did the other houses go?’

But the old man had gone off on another tack.

‘There were more Coppins,’ he said. ‘When I was a boy, to be a Coppin of Stepney was a thing of pride. Josephus’s father was Churchwarden and held up his head.’

‘Did he, really?’

‘If I hadn’t the Property to look after, I would show you his tombstone in Stepney churchyard.’

‘That,’ said Harry, ‘would be a great happiness for me. As for Caroline Coppin, now——’

‘She was a pretty maid, she was,’ the old man went on. ‘I saw her born and brought up. And she married a sojer.’

‘I know, and her three houses were lost too, I suppose?’

‘Why should her houses be lost, young man?’ Mr. Maliphant asked with severity. ‘Houses don’t run away. This Property doesn’t run away. When she died, she left a baby, she did, and when the baby was took—or was stolen—or something—Bunker said those houses were his. But not lost. You can’t lose a house. You may lose a figurehead;’ he got up and looked outside to see if his were safe—‘or a big drum. But not a house.’

‘Oh!’ Harry started. ‘Bunker said the houses were his, did he?’

‘Of course he did.’

‘And if the baby had not died, those houses would still be the property of that baby, I suppose?’

But Mr. Maliphant made no reply. He was

now in the full enjoyment of the intoxication produced by his morning pipe, and was sitting in his arm-chair with his feet on the fender, disposed, apparently, for silence. Presently he began to talk, as usual, to himself. Nor could he be induced, by any leading questions, to remember anything more of the things which Harry wanted him to remember. But he let his imagination wander. Gradually the room became filled with dead people, and he was talking with them. Nor did he seem to know that Harry was with him at all.

Harry slipped quietly away, shutting the door after him, so that the old man might be left quite alone with his ghosts.

The yard, littered with wood, crowded with the figureheads, all of which seemed turning inquiring and jealous eyes upon the stranger, was silent and ghostly. Thither came the old man every day, to sit before the fire in his little red and green doll's house, to cook his own beefsteak for himself, to drink his glass of grog after dinner, to potter about among his carved heads, to talk to his friends the ghosts, to guard his Property, and to execute the orders which



'In the full enjoyment of the intoxication produced by his morning pipe.'

never came. For the shipbuilders who had employed old Mr. Maliphant were all dead and gone, and nobody knew of his yard any more, and he had it all to himself. The tide of time had carried away all his friends and left him alone ; the memory of him among active men was gone : no one took any more interest in him : and he had ceased to care for anything : to look back was his only pleasure. No one likes to die at any time, but who would wish to grow so very old ?

And those houses ! Why, if the old man's memory was right, then Bunker had simply appropriated his property. Was that, Harry asked, the price for which he traded the child away ?

He went straight away to his cousin Dick, who, mindful of the recent speech at the Club, was a little disposed to be resentful. It fortunately takes two to make a quarrel, however, and one of those two had no intention of a family row.

Never mind, Dick,' he said, in answer to an allusion to the speech. 'Hang the Club. I want to ask you about something else. Now, then. Tell me about your grandfather.'

‘I cannot. He died before I can remember. He was a builder.’

‘Did he leave property?’

‘There were some houses, I believe. My father lost his share, I know. Speculated it away.’

‘Your uncle Bob—what became of his share?’

‘Bob was a worthless chap. He drank everything, so of course he drank up his houses.’

‘Then we come to the two daughters. Bunker married one, and of course he got his wife’s share. What became of my mother’s share?’

‘Indeed, Harry, I do not know.’

‘Who would know?’

‘Bunker ought to be able to tell you all about it. Of course he knows.’

‘Dick,’ said Harry, ‘should you be astonished to learn that the respectable uncle Bunker is a mighty great rogue? But say nothing, Dick. Say nothing. Let me consider how to bring the thing home to him.’

CHAPTER XXX.

THE PROFESSOR'S PROPOSAL.

WHEN the Professor called upon Angela that same Sunday morning and requested an interview, she perceived that something serious was intended. He had on, as if for an occasion, a new coat with a flower in the buttonhole—a chrysanthemum. His face was extremely solemn, and his fingers, which always seemed restless and dissatisfied unless they were making things disappear and come again, were quite still. Certainly, he had something on his mind.

The drawing-room had one or two girls in it, who were reading and talking, though they ought to have been in church—Angela left their religious duties to their own consciences. But the dining-room was empty, and the interview was held there.

The Professor had certainly made up in his own mind exactly what was going to be said; he had dramatised the situation—a very good plan if you are quite sure of the replies; otherwise, you are apt to be put out.

‘Miss Kennedy,’ he began, with a low voice, ‘allow me, first of all, to thank you for your great kindness during a late season of depression.’

‘I am glad it is a *late* season,’ said Angela; ‘that means, I presume, that the depression has passed away.’

‘Quite, I am glad to say; in fact,’ the Professor laughed cheerfully, ‘I have got engagements from now to nearly the end of April, in the country, and am in treaty for a west-end engagement in May. Industry and application, not to speak of talent, will make their way in the long run. But I hope I am none the less grateful to you for your loan—let me call it a loan—when things were tight. I assure you, Miss Kennedy, that the run into the country, after those parish registers, was as good as a week’s engagement, simple as it looked; and as for that Saturday night for your girls——’

‘Oh! Professor, we were agreed that it should appear to be given by you for nothing.’

‘Never mind what was agreed. You know very well what was paid for it. Now, if it hadn’t been for that night’s performance and that little trip into the country, I verily believe they would have had to send for a nice long box for me, a box that can’t be palmed, and I should have gone off in it to a country where perhaps they don’t care for conjuring.’

‘In that case, Professor, I am very glad to have been of help.’

‘And so,’ he went on—following the programme he had laid down in his own mind; ‘and so I have come here to-day, to ask if your interest in conjuring could be stimulated to a professional height.’

‘Really, I do not know — professional? You mean——’

‘Anybody can see that you’ve showed an interest in the subject beyond what is expected or found in women. What I came here to-day for is to ask whether you like the conjurer well enough to take to conjuring?’

Angela laughed and was astonished after being told by Daniel Fagg that he would honour her by making her his wife, but for certain reasons of age. Now, having become hardened, it seemed but a small thing to receive the offer of a conjurer, and the proposal to join the profession.

‘I think it must be the science, Professor,’ she said; ‘yes; it must be the science that I like so much. Not the man who exhibits his skill in the science. Yes, I think always of your admirable science.’

‘Ah!’ he heaved a deep sigh, ‘you are quite right, Miss; science is better than love. Love! what sort of a thing is that, when you get tired of it in a month? But science fills up all your life—and we are always learning—always.’

‘I am so glad, Professor, that I can agree with you entirely.’

‘Which makes me bolder,’ he said, ‘because we could be useful to each other, without pretending to be in love, or any nonsense of that sort.’

‘Indeed! Now, I shall be very pleased to

be useful to you without, as you say, any foolish pretence or nonsense.'

'The way is this; you can play, can't you?'

'Yes.'

'And sing?'

'Yes.'

'Did you ever dance in tights?'

'No, I never did that.'

'Ah well—it's a pity—but one can't expect everything. And no doubt you'd take to it easy. They all do. Did you ever sing on the stage—at a music-hall, I mean?'

'No; I never did.'

'There was a chap—but I suppose he was a liar—said you used to sing under an electric light at the Canterbury, with a character dance and a topical song and a kick-up at the finish.'

'Yes, Professor. I think that "chap" must certainly be written down a liar. But go on.'

'I told him he was, and he offered to fight me for half-a-crown. When I said I'd do it, and willing, for a bob, he went away. I think he's the fellow Harry Goslett knocked down

one night. Bunker put him up to it. Bunker doesn't like you. Never mind him. Look here now.'

'I am looking, as hard as I can.'

'There's some things that bring the money in, and some that don't. Dressmaking don't, conjurin' does.'

'Yet, you yourself, Professor——'

'Why?' he asked; 'because I am only four-and-twenty, and not much known as yet. Give me time — wait — Lord! to see the clumsy things done by the men who've got a name; and how they go down! And a child would spot the dodge. Now, mark my words, if you will stand in with me, there's a fortune in it.'

'For your sake, I am glad to hear it, but it must be without me.'

'It's for your sake that I tell you of it.'

He was not in love at all—love and science have never yet really composed their differences—and there was not the least dropping of his voice or any other sign of passion in his speech.

'For your sake,' he repeated, 'because if

you can be got to see your way as I see it, there's a fortune for both of us.'

'Oh!'

'Yes. Now, Miss, you listen; conjuring, like most things, is makin' believe and deceivin'. What we do is to show you one thing and to do another. The only thing is, to do it so quick that it shan't be seen, even by the few men who know how it is done. No woman yet was ever able to be a conjurer, which is a rum thing, because their fingers do pretty for music and lacework and such. But for conjurin', they haven't the mind. You want a man's brain for such work.'

'I have always,' said Angela, 'felt what poor weak things we are compared with men.'

'Yes, you are,' continued the Professor gallantly; 'but you do have your uses in the world. Most things have. Now, as a confederate or an assistant, there's nobody like a woman. They do what they are told to do; they are faithful over the secrets; they learn their place on the platform, and they stay there. Some professors carry about a boy with them. But you can't place any real trust in a boy. He's

always up to tricks, and if you wallop him, likely as not, next night, he'll take and spoil your best trick, out of revenge. Some have a man to help, but then he learns the secrets and tries to cut you out. But with a woman you're always pretty safe. A daughter's best, because then you pocket all the money yourself; but a wife is next best, so long as she keeps steady and acts on the square.'

'I never thought of it before,' said Angela. 'But I suppose it is as you say, and the real object for which women were created must have been the assistance of conjurers.'

'Of course,' said the Professor, failing to see the delicate sarcasm of this remark. 'Of course: what better thing could they do? Why: here you sit slaving all day long and all the year round, and what are you better for it? A bare living: that's all you get out of it. Whether you go into shops, behind a bar, or into the workroom, it's the same story: a bare living. Look at the conjurin' line, now. You live in splendour: you go on the stage in a most beautiful costoom—silks and satins, gold and spangles, tights if you like: you travel about

the country free: you hear the people clap-pin' their hands whenever you go on, and believin' that you do it all yourself: you've got nothing to do but just what you are told: and—and that's your life, with pockets full of money and the proud consciousness that you are making your fortune.'

'It certainly seems very beautiful to look at. Are there no drawbacks?'

'None,' answered the enthusiast. 'It's the best profession in the world. There's no danger in it: there's no capital required: all it wants is cleverness. That's why I come to you, because you are a real clever girl, and what's more, you're good-looking. It is not always that looks and brains go together.'

'Very well, Professor. Let us come to the point. What is it you want me to do?'

'I want you, Miss Kennedy, to go about the country with me. You shall be my assistant: you shall play the piano and come on dressed in a pink costoom, which generally fetches at an entertainment. Nothing to say: and I will teach you, by degrees, all the dodges; and the way it's done you will learn. You'll be

surprised when you find how easy it is, and yet how you can't do it; and when you hear the people telling what they saw, and you know just exactly what they could have seen if they'd had their eyes in their heads, you'll laugh—you will.'

'But I am afraid I can't think——'

'Don't raise difficulties, now,' he spoke persuasively. 'I am coming to them directly. I've got ideas in my head which I can't carry through without a real clever confederate, and you must be that confederate. Electricity, now,' he lowered his voice and whispered, 'none of the conjurers have got a battery at work. Think of new feats of marvel and magic, never before considered possible—and done secret by electricity. What a shame—what a cruel shame—to have let the world get hold of electricity. Why, it ought to have been kept for conjurers. And telephones, again: what a scope there is in a good telephone. You and me together, Miss Kennedy, could knock up an entertainment as nobody yet ever dreamed of. If you could dance a bit, it would be an advantage: but if you

won't, of course we must give it up; and as to the dressmaking rubbish, why, in a week you will be wondering how in the world you ever came to waste your time upon it at all while such a chance was going about in the world. Not that I blame you for it: not at all: it was your ignorance kept you out of it and your good luck threw you in the way of it.'

'That may be so; but still I am not sure——'

'I haven't done yet. Look here, I've been turning the thing over in my own mind a good bit. The only way I can think of for such a girl as you to go about the country with a show, is for you to be married to the showman. So I'll marry you before we start, and then we shall be comfortable and happy, and ready for the fortune to come in, and you'll be quite sure of your share in it.'

'Thank you, Professor.'

'Very good then, no need for thanks. I've got engagements in the country for over three months. We'll marry at once, and you can spend that time in learning.'

Angela laughed. Were women of 'her class,' she thought, so easily won and so unceremoniously wooed? Were there no preliminary advances, soft speeches, words of compliment and flattery?

'I've been laying out a plan,' the Professor went on, 'for the most complete thing you ever saw—never before attempted on any stage—marvellous optical illusion. Hush! ELECTRICITY;' he said this in a stage whisper. 'You are to be a fairy—stale old business, isn't it? but it always pays. Silk stockings' and gauze, with a wand. I'm Sinbad the Sailor—or Robinson Crusoe—it doesn't matter what—and then you——'

'Stay a moment, Professor;' she laid her hand upon his arm; 'you have not waited for my answer. I cannot, unfortunately, marry you, nor can I go about the country with you, nor can I possibly become your confederate and assistant.'

'You can't marry me? Why not? When I offer you a fortune?'

'Not even for the fortune.'

'Why not?'

‘Well, for many reasons. One of them is that I cannot leave my dressmaking, rubbish as it seems to you. That is, indeed, a sufficient reason.’

‘Oh!’ his face becoming very sad. ‘And I set my heart upon it! The very first time I saw you, I said to myself, “There’s a girl for the business.” Never was such a girl! And to think that you’re thrown away on a dress-making business! Oh! it’s too bad. And that you’re contented with your lot, humble as it is, when I offer to make you an artist and to give you a fortune! That’s what cuts me to the quick; that you should be contented.’

‘I am very much ashamed of myself,’ said Angela with contrition. ‘But you see, what you ask is impossible.’

‘And I only made up my mind last night, that I would marry you, if nothing else would do.’

‘Did you? poor Professor! I am quite sorry for you. But you should never marry a woman unless you are in love with her. Now, it is quite clear that you are not in love with me.’

‘Love! I’ve got my work to think of.’

‘Then good morning, Professor; let us part friends, if I cannot accept your offer.’

He took her offered hand with reluctance, and in sorrow more than in anger.

‘Do you really understand,’ he asked, ‘what you are throwing away? Fame and fortune. Nothing less.’

She laughed and drew back her hand, shaking her head.

‘Oh! the woman’s a fool,’ cried the Professor, losing his temper and slamming the door after him.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CAPTAIN COPPIN.

It was at this time that Tom Coppin, Captain Coppin of the Salvation Army, paid his only visit to Angela, that visit which caused so great a sensation among the girls.

He chose a quiet evening early in the week. Why he came has never been quite clear. It was not curiosity, for he had none ; nor was it a desire to study the kind of culture which Angela had introduced among her friends, for he had no knowledge of, or desire for, culture at all. Nor does the dressmakers' workshop afford a congenial place for the exercise of that soldier's gifts. He came, perhaps, because he was passing by on his way from a red-hot prayer meeting to a red-hot preaching, and he thought he would see the place which, among others—the Advanced Club, for in-

stance—was keeping his brother from following in his own steps, and helping him to regard the world, its pleasures and pursuits, with eyes of affection. One knows not what he expected to find or what he proposed by going there, because the things he did find completely upset all his expectations, if he had any. Visions, perhaps, of the soul-destroying dance, and the red cup, and the loud laughter of fools, and the talk that is as the crackling of thorns, were in his mind.

The room was occupied, as usual, with the girls, Angela among them ; Captain Sorensen was there too ; the girls were quietly busy, for the most part, over ‘ their own ’ work, because, if they would go fine, they must make their own fineries ; it was a frosty night, and the fire was burning clear ; in the most comfortable chair beside it sat the crippled girl of whom we know ; the place was hers by a sort of right ; she was gazing into the flames, listening lazily to the music—Angela had been playing—and doing nothing, with contentment. Life was so sweet to the child when she was not suffering pain, and was warm, and was not

hungry, and was not hearing complaints, that she wanted nothing more. Nelly, for her part, sat with hands folded pensively, and Angela wondered, but with knowledge, what, of late days, it was that seemed to trouble her.

Suddenly the door opened, and a man, dressed in a tight uniform of dark cloth and a cap of the same with S. S. upon it like the Lord Mayor's gold chain, stood before them.

He did not remove his cap, but he looked round the room, and presently called in a loud harsh voice:—

‘Which of you here answers to the name of Kennedy?’

‘I do,’ replied Angela; ‘my name is Kennedy. What is yours? and why do you come here?’

‘My name is Coppin. My work is to save souls. I tear them out of the very clutches and claws of the devil; I will have them; I leave them no peace until I have won them; I cry aloud to them; I shout to them; I pray for them; I sing to them; I seek them out in their hiding-places, even in their dens and courts of sin; there are none too far gone for

my work ; none that I will let go once I get a grip of them ; once my hand is on them, out they must come, if the devil and all his angels were pulling them the other way. For my strength is not of myself ; it is——’

‘But why do you come here?’ asked Angela.

The man had the same black hair and bright eyes as his brother ; the same strong voice, although a long course of street shouting had made it coarse and rough ; but his eyes were brighter, his lips more sensitive, his forehead higher ; he was like his brother in all respects, yet so unlike that, while the Radical had the face of a strong man, the preacher had in his the indefinable touch of weakness which fanaticism always brings with it. Whatever else it was, however, the face was that of a man terribly in earnest.

‘I have heard about you,’ he said ; ‘you are of those who cry peace when there is no peace ; you entice the young men and maidens who ought to be seeking pardon, and preaching repentance, and you destroy their souls with dancing and music. I come here to tell

you that you are one of the instruments of the devil in this wicked town.'

'Have you really come here, Mr. Coppin, on purpose to tell me that?'

'That,' he said, 'is part of my message.'

'Do you think,' asked Angela, because this was almost intolerable, 'that it is becoming a preacher like yourself to invade a quiet and private house, in order to insult a woman?'

'Truth is not insult,' he said; 'I come here as I would go to a theatre or a singing hall or any soul-destroying place. You shall hear the plain truth. With your music and your dancing and your pleasant ways, you are corrupting the souls of many. My brother is hardened in his unrepentance, since he knew you. My cousin goes on laughing, and dances over the very pit of destruction, through you. These girls——'

'Oh!' cried Rebekah, who had no sympathy with the Salvation Army, and felt herself an authority when the religious question was touched, 'they are all mad. Let him go away.'

'I would,' replied the Captain, 'that you

were half as mad. Oh! I know you now : I know you smug professors of a Saturday religion——’

‘Your mission,’ Angela interrupted, ‘is not, I am sure, to argue about another sect. Come, Mr. Coppin, now that you have told us who you are, and what is your profession, and why you come here, you might like to preach to us. Do so, if you will. We were sitting here quietly when you came, and you interrupt nothing. So that, if it would really make you feel any happier, you may preach to us for a few minutes.’

He looked about him in hesitation. This kind of preaching was not in his line : he loved a vast hall with a thousand faces looking at him ; or a crowd of turbulent roughs ready to answer the Message with a volley of brickbats ; or a chance gathering of unrepentant sinners in a wide thoroughfare. He could lift up his voice to them : but to preach in a quiet room to a dozen girls was a new experience.

And it was not the place which he had expected. His brother, in their last interview, had thrown in his teeth this house and its

doings as offering a more reasonable solution of life's problems than his own. 'You want everybody,' he said, 'to join you in singing and preaching every day: what should we do when there was nobody left to preach at? Now, there, what they say is, "Let us make ourselves comfortable." There's a deal in that, come to think of it. Look at those girls, now: while you and your Happy Elizas are trampin' in the mud with your flag and your procession, and gettin' black eyes and brickbats, they are singin' and laughin' and dancin', and makin' what fun they can for themselves. It seems to me, Tom, that if this kind of thing gets fashionable, you and your army will be played out.'

Well: he had come to see this place which offered pleasure instead of repentance as a method of improving life. They were not laughing and singing at all: there were no men present except one old gentleman in a blue coat with brass buttons. To be sure, he had a fiddle lying on a chair beside him. There was no indication whatever of the red cup, and no smell of tobacco. Now, pleasure without drink, tobacco, and singing, had been in Tom's un-

regenerate days incomprehensible. ‘I would rather,’ said Dick, ‘see an army of Miss Kennedy’s girls than an army of Hallelujah Pols.’ Yet they seemed perfectly quiet. ‘Make ’em happy, Tom, first,’ said Dick, who was still thinking over Harry’s speech as a possible point of departure. Happiness is not a word in the dictionary of men like Tom Coddin : they know not what it means : they know a spree : they understand a drink : they know misery, because it is all round them ; the misery of hunger, of disease, of intemperance, of dirt, of evil temper, of violence : the misery which the sins of one bring upon all, and the sins of all bring upon each. Indeed, we need not go to Whitechapel to find out misery. But they know not happiness. For such as Captain Coddin there is, as an alternative for misery, the choice of Glory. What they mean by Glory is the ecstasy, the rapture, the mysteries of emotional religion : he, they believe, is the most advanced who is most often hysterical : Tom, like many of his followers, yearned honestly and unselfishly to extend this rapture which he himself so often enjoyed ; but that there should be any other

way out of misery save by way of the humble stool of Conviction was a thing which he could not understand. Happiness, calm, peace, content, the sweet enjoyment of innocent recreation,—these things he knew nothing of; they had not come in his way.

He had come: he had seen: no doubt, the moment his back was turned the orgies would begin. But he had delivered his message: he had warned the young woman who led the girls—that calm, cold woman who looked at him with curiosity and was so unmoved by what he said: he might go. With his whole heart he had spoken, and had so far moved no one except the daughter of the Seventh Day Independent—and her only a little. This kind of thing is very irritating. Suppose you were to put a red-hot poker into a jug of water without producing any steam or hissing at all; how, as a natural philosopher, would you feel?

‘You may preach to us, if you like,’ said Miss Kennedy.

She sat before him, resting her chin upon her hand. He knew that she was beautiful, although women and their faces, graces, and

sweet looks played no part at all in his thoughts. He felt, without putting the thing into words, that she was beautiful ; also, that she regarded him with a kind of contempt, as well as curiosity ; also, that she had determined not to be moved by anything he might say ; also, that she relied on her own influence over the girls. And he felt for a moment as if his trusty weapons were dropping from his hands, and his whole armour was slipping from his shoulders. Not her beauty : no : fifty Helens of Troy would not have moved this young apostle : but her position as an impregnable outsider. For against the curious outsider, who regards Captains in the Salvation Army only as so many interesting results of growing civilisation, their officers are powerless indeed.

If there is any real difference between the working man of England and the man who does other work, it is that the former is generally emotional and the latter is not. To the man of emotion things cannot be stated too strongly ; his leader is he who has the greatest command of adjectives ; he is singularly open to the charm of eloquence ; he likes audacity of state-

ment ; he likes to be moved by wrath, pity and terror ; he has no eye for shades of colour ; and when he is most moved he thinks he is most right. It is this which makes him so angry with the people who cannot be moved.

Angela was one of those persons who cannot be moved by the ordinary methods. She looked at Tom as if he was some strange creature ; watching what he did, listening to what he said, *as if she was not like unto him.* It is not quite a fair way of describing Angela's attitude of mind ; but it is near enough ; and it represents what passed through the brain of the Salvation Captain.

‘ Will you preach to us ? ’ she repeated a third time.

He mechanically opened his hymn-book.

‘ Number three hundred and sixty-two,’ he said quietly.

He sang the hymn all by himself, at the top of his voice, so that the windows rattled, to one of those rousing and popular melodies which have been pressed into the service of the Army ; it was, in fact, ‘ Molly Darling,’ and the people on Stepney Green asked each other in wonder

if a meeting of the Salvation Army was actually being held at Miss Kennedy's.

When he had finished his hymn, he began to preach.

He stammered at first, because the surroundings were strange; besides, the cold, curious eyes of Miss Kennedy chilled him. Presently, however, he recovered self-possession, and began his address.

There is one merit, at least, possessed by these preachers: it is that of simplicity. Whatever else they may be, they are always the same; even the words do not vary while there is but one idea.

If you want to influence the dull of comprehension, such as the common donkey, there is but one way possible. He cannot be led, or coaxed, or persuaded; he must be thwacked. Father Stick explains and makes apparent, instantly, what the logic of all the schools has failed to prove. In the same way, if you wish to awaken the spiritual emotions among people who have hitherto been strange to them, your chance is not by argument, but by appeals, statements, prophecies, threats, terrors, and

pictures, which, in fact, do exactly correspond, and produce the same effect as Father Stick ; they are so many knock-down blows ; they belabour and they terrify.

The preacher began : the girls composed themselves to listen, with the exception of Rebekah, who went on with her work ostentatiously, partly to show her disapproval of such irregular proceedings, and partly as one who, having got the Truth from an independent source and being already advanced in the narrow way, had no occasion for the Captain's persuasion.

It is one thing to hear the voice of a street preacher in his own church, so to speak, that is, on the curb stone, and quite another thing to hear the same man and the same sermon in a quiet room. Tom Coppin had only one sermon, though he dressed it up sometimes, but not often, in new words. Yet it was relieved of monotony by the earnestness which he poured into it. He believed in it, himself : that goes a long way. Angela began by thinking of the doctrine, but presently turned her attention to the preacher, and began to think what manner

of man he was. Personally he was pale and thin, with strong black hair, like his brother, and his eyes were singularly bright.

Here was a man of the people ; self-taught, profoundly ignorant as to the many problems of life and their many solutions ; filled, however, with that noble sympathy which makes prophets, poets, martyrs ; wholly possessed of faith in his narrow creed ; owning no authority of church or priest : believing himself under direct Divine guidance, chosen and called, the instrument of merciful Heaven to drag guilty souls from the pit ; consciously standing as a servant day and night before a Throne which other men regard afar off, or cannot see at all ; actually living the life of hardship, privation, and ill-treatment which he preached ; for the sake of others, enduring hardness, poverty, contumely ; taking all these things as part and parcel of the day's work ; and in the name of duty, searching into corners and holes of this great town for the vilest, the most hardened, the most depraved, the most blinded to a higher life.

This, if you please, is not a thing to be

laughed at. What did Wesley more? What did Whitefield? Nay—what did Paul?

They paid him for his services, it is true; they gave him five-and-twenty shillings a week; some of this great sum he gave away; the rest provided him with poor and simple food. He had no pleasures or joys of life; he had no recreations; he had no hope of any pleasures; some of the officers of his Army—being men and women as well as preachers—loved each other and were married; but this man had no thought of any such thing; he, as much as any monk, was vowed to the service of the Master, without rest or holiday, or any other joy than that of doing the work that lay before him.

A great pity and sympathy filled Angela's heart as she thought of these things.

The man before her was for the moment a prophet; it mattered nothing that his creed was narrow, his truths only half-truths, his doctrine commonplace, his language in bad taste, his manner vulgar; the faith of the man covered up and hid these defects; he had a message to mankind; he was delivering that message; to him it was a fresh new message;

never before entrusted to any man ; he had to deliver it perpetually, even though he went in starvation.

Angela's heart softened as she realised the loyalty of the man. He saw the softening in her eyes, and thought it was the first sign of conviction.

But it was not.

Meantime, if Angela was thinking of the preacher, the girls of course, with the exception of Rebekah, were trembling at his words.

Suddenly—the unexpected change was a kind of rhetorical trick which often proved effective—the preacher ceased to denounce and threaten, and spoke of pardon and peace ; he called upon them in softer voice, in accents full of tears and love, to break down their pride, to hear the voice that called them We know well enough what he said, only we do not know how he said it. Angela looked about the room. The Captain sat with his hands on his knees and his face dutifully lifted to the angle which denotes attention ; his expression was unmoved ; evidently, the Captain was not open to conviction. As for the girls, they

might be divided into classes. They had all listened to the threats and the warnings, though they had heard them often enough before ; now, however, some of them seemed as if they were impatient, and as if with a little encouragement they could break into scoffing. But others were crying, and one or two were steadfastly regarding the speaker, as if he had mesmerised them. Among these was Nelly. Her eyes were fixed, her lips were parted, her breathing was quick, her cheek was pale.

Great and wonderful is the power of eloquence ; there are few orators ; this ex-printer, this uneducated man of the ranks, was, like his brother, born with the gift that is so rare. He should have been taken away and taught, and kept from danger, and properly fed and cared for. And now it is too late. They said of him in his Connection that he was blessed in the saving of souls ; the most stubborn, the most hardened, when they fell under the magic of his presence and his voice, were broken and subdued : what wonder that a weak girl should give way ?

When he paused he looked round ; he

noted the faces of those whom he had mesmerised ; he raised his arm ; he pointed to Nelly, and beckoned her without a word to rise.

Then the girl stood up as if she could not choose but obey. She moved a step towards him ; in a moment she would have been at his feet, with sobs and tears, in the passion of self-abasement which is so dear to the revivalist. But Angela broke the spell. She sprang towards her, caught her in her own arms, and passed her hand before her eyes.

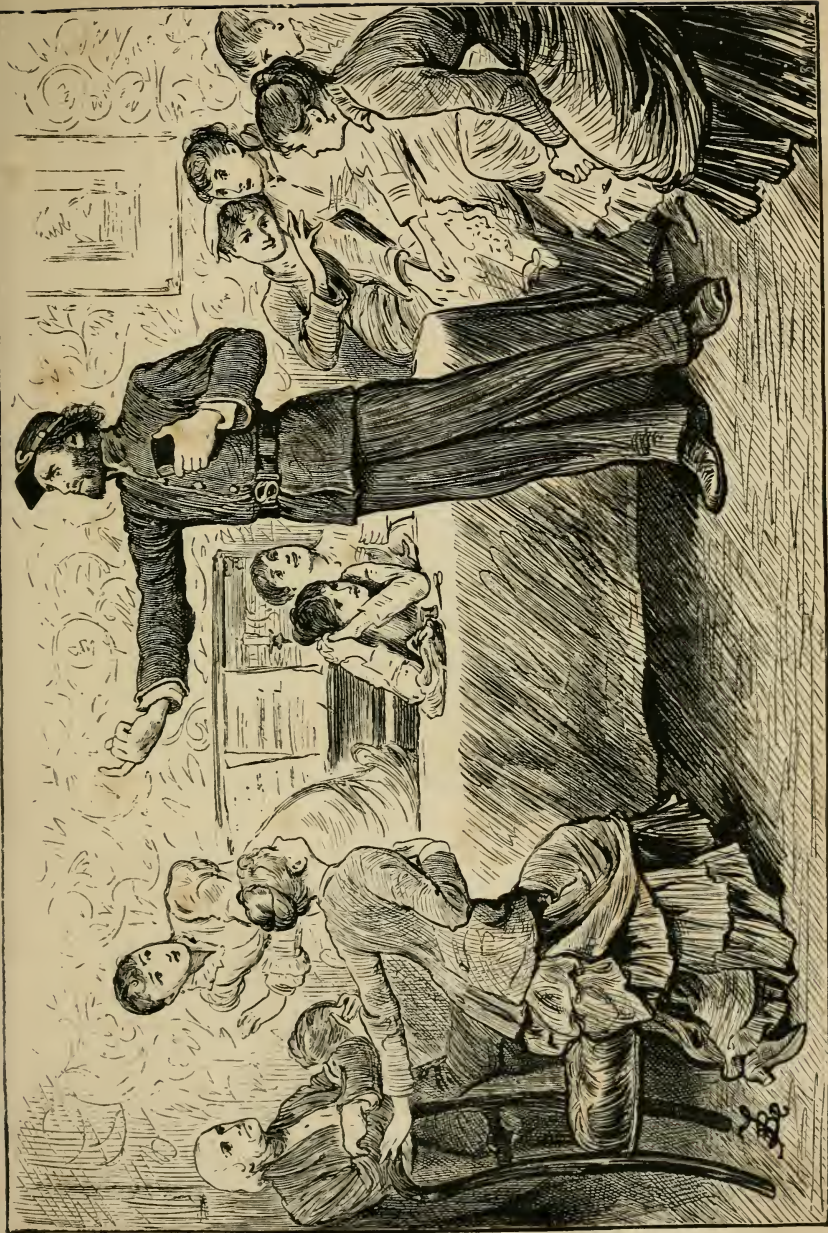
‘ Nelly ! ’ she said gently ; ‘ Nelly, dear ! ’

The girl sank back in her chair and buried her face in her hands. But the moment was gone, and Captain Coppin had lost his recruit.

They all breathed a deep sigh. Those who had not been moved looked at each other and laughed ; those who were, dried their eyes and seemed ashamed.

‘ Thank you,’ said Angela to the preacher. ‘ You have preached very well, and I hope your words will help us on our way, even though it is not quite your way.’

‘ Then, be of our way. Cease from scoffing.’



'He beckoned her, without a word, to rise.'

She shook her head.

‘No, I do not scoff, but I cannot join your way. Leave us now, Mr. Coppin. You are a brave man. Let us reverence courage and loyalty. But we will have no more sermons in this room. Good night!’

She offered him her hand, but he would not take it, and with a final warning addressed to Angela in particular and the room in general, he went as he had come, without greeting or word of thanks.

‘These Salvation people,’ said Rebekah, ‘are all mad. If people want the way of truth there’s the chapel in Redman’s Row, and father’s always in it every Saturday.’

‘What do you say, Captain Sorensen?’ asked Angela.

‘The Church of England,’ said the Captain, who had not been moved a whit, ‘says that two sacraments are necessary. I find nothing about stools of repentance. Come, Nelly, my girl, remember that you are a Churchwoman.’

‘Yet,’ said Angela, ‘what are we to say when a man is so brave and true and when he

lives the life? Nelly dear—girls all—I think that religion should not be a terror, but a great calm and a trust. Let us love each other, and do our work, and take the simple happiness that God gives, and have faith. What more can we do? To-night, I think, we cannot dance or sing, but I will play to you.'

She played to them—grand and solemn music—so that the terror went out of their brains, and the hardening out of their hearts, and next day all was forgotten.

In this manner, and this once, did Tom Coppin cross Angela's path. Now he will cross it no more, because his work is over. If a man lives on less than the bare necessities, in order to give to others, if he does the work of ten men, if he gives himself no rest any day in the week, what happens to that man when typhus seizes him?

He died, as he had lived, in glory, surrounded by Joyful Jane, Hallelujah Jem, Happy Pol, Thankful Sarah, and the rest of them. His life has been narrated in the 'War Cry'; it is specially recorded of him that he was

always ‘on the mountains’; which means, in their language, that he was a man of strong faith, free from doubt, and of emotional nature.

The extremely wicked and hardened family, consisting of an old woman and half-a-dozen daughters, for whose souls’ sake he starved himself, and thereby fell an easy prey to the disease, have nearly all found a refuge in the workhouse, and are as hardened as ever, though not so wicked, because some kinds of wickedness are not allowed in that palace of virtue. Therefore it seems almost as if poor Tom’s life has been fooled away. According to a philosophy which makes a great deal of noise just now, every life is but a shadow, a dream, a mockery, a catching at things impossible, and a waste of good material, ending with the last breath. Then, all our lives are fooled away, and why not Tom’s as well as the rest? But if the older way of thinking is, after all, right; then, that life can hardly have been wasted which was freely given—even if the gift was not accepted—for the advantage of

others. Because the memory and the example remain, and every example—if boys and girls could only be taught this copy-book truth—is like an inexhaustible horn, always filled with precious seed.

CHAPTER XXXII.

BUNKER AT BAY.

HARRY was thinking a good deal about the old man's strange story of the houses. There was, to be sure, little dependence to be placed in the rambling, disjointed statements made by so old a man; but then, this statement was so clear and precise;—there were so many children; there were so many houses—three for each child; and he knew exactly what became of all those houses. If the story had been told by a man in the prime of life, it could not have been more exact and detailed. But what were the houses? where were they? and how could he prove that they were his own?

What did Bunker get, when he traded the child away?

Harry had always been of opinion that he got a sum of money down, and that he was

now ashamed of the transaction and would fain have it remain unknown. This solution accounted, or seemed to account, for his great wrath and agitation when the subject was mentioned. Out of a mischievous delight in making his uncle angry, Harry frequently alluded to the point. But the story of the houses was a better solution still; it accounted for Mr. Bunker's agitation as well as his wrath. But his wrath and his terror appeared to Harry to corroborate very strongly the old man's story. And the longer he thought about it, the more strongly he believed it.

Harry asked his landlady whether, in her opinion, if Mr. Maliphant made a statement, that statement was to be accepted as true.

Mrs. Bormalack replied that as he never made any statement except in reference to events long since things of the past, it was impossible for her to say whether they were true or not; that his memory was clean gone for things of the present, so that of to-day and yesterday he knew nothing; that his thoughts were always running on the old days; and that when he could be heard right through

without dropping his voice at all, he sometimes told very interesting and curious things. His board and lodging were paid for him by his grandson, a most respectable gentleman and a dockmaster; and, as to the old man's business, he had none, and had had none for many years, being clean forgotten, although he did go every day to his yard and stayed there all day long.

Harry thought he would pay him another visit. Perhaps something more would be remembered.

He went there again in the morning. The street at the end of which was the yard was as quiet as on the Sunday, the children being at school and the men at work. The great gates were closed and locked, but the small side door was unlocked. When he opened it all the figureheads turned quickly and anxiously to look at him: at least, Harry declares they did, and spiritualists will readily believe him. Was he, they asked, going to take one of them away and stick it on the bow of a great ship and send it up and down upon the face of the ocean to the four corners of the world? Ha! They were made for an active life: they pined

away in this inactivity : a fig for the dangers of the deep. From Saucy Sal to Neptune, they all asked the same question in the same hope. Harry shook his head, and they sighed sadly and resumed their former positions, as they were, eyes front, waiting till night should fall and the old man should go, and they could talk with each other.

‘This,’ thought Harry, ‘is a strange and ghostly place.’

You know the cold and creepy feeling caused by the presence — albeit unseen — of ghosts ; one may feel it anywhere and at all times : in church : at a theatre : in bed at night : by broad daylight : in darkness : or in twilight. This was in the sunshine of a bright December day — the last days of the year eighty-one were singularly bright and gracious : the place was no dark chamber or gloomy vault, but a broad and open yard, cheerfully decorated with carved figureheads. Yet even here Harry experienced the touch of ghostliness.

The place was so strange that it did not astonish him at all to see the old man suddenly appear in the door of his doll’s house, waving

his hand and smiling cheerily, as one who speeds the parting guest. The salutations were not intended for Harry, because Mr. Maliphant was not looking at him.

Presently he ceased gesticulating, became suddenly serious (as happens to one when his friend's back is turned or he has vanished), and returned to his seat by the fire.

Harry softly followed and stood before him, waiting to be recognised.

The old man looked up at last and nodded his head.

‘Been entertaining your friends, Mr. Maliphant?’

‘Bob was here, only Bob. You have just missed Bob,’ he replied.

‘That’s a pity. Never mind. Can you, my ancient, carry your memory back some twenty years? You did it, you know, last Sunday for me.’

‘Twenty years? Ay—ay—twenty years. I was only sixty-five or so, then. It seems a long time until it is gone. Twenty years. Well, young man, twenty years. Why, it is only yesterday.’

‘I mean to the time when Caroline Coppin, you know, your old friend Caroline, was married.’

‘That was twenty years before, and more : when William the Fourth died and Queen Victoria, then a young thing, came long to reign over us——’ his voice sank and he continued the rest of his reminiscence to himself.

‘But Caroline Coppin?’

‘I’m telling you about Caroline Coppin, only you won’t listen.’

There was nothing more to be got out of him. His recent conversation with Bob’s spirit had muddled him for the day, and he mixed up Caroline with her mother or grandmother. He relapsed into silence, and sat with his long pipe unfilled in his hand, looking into the fireplace, gone back in imagination to the past. As the old man made no sign of conversation, but rather of a disposition to ‘drop off’ for a few minutes, Harry began to look about the room. On the table lay a bundle of old letters : it was as if the living and the dead had been reading them together. Harry took them up and turned them over, wondering what secrets of long ago

were contained in those yellow papers with their faded ink. The old man's eyes were closed: he took no heed of his visitor, and Harry standing at the table began shamelessly to read the letters.

They were mostly the letters of a young sailor addressed to one apparently a good deal older than himself, for they abounded in such appellations as 'my ancient,' 'venerable,' 'old salt,' and so forth; but the young man did not regard his correspondent with the awe which age should inspire, but rather as a gay and rollicking spirit who would sympathise with the high jinks of younger men even if he no longer shared in them, and who was an old and still delighted treader of those flowery paths which are said by moralists to be planted with the frequent pitfall and the crafty trap. The old man, thought Harry, must have been an admirable guide to youth, and the disciple was apt to learn. Sometimes the letters were signed Bob: sometimes R. Coppin: sometimes R. C. Harry therefore surmised that the writer was no other than his own uncle Bob, whose ghost he had just missed.

Bob was an officer on board of an East Indiaman : but he spoke not of such commonplace matters as the face of ocean or the voice of the tempest : he only wrote from port, and told what things he had seen and done on shore, and what he had consumed in ardent drink. The letters were brief, which seemed as well, because if literary skill had been present to dress up effectively the subjects treated, a literary monument might have been erected the like of which the world has never seen. It is, indeed, a most curious and remarkable circumstance, that even in realistic France the true course of the Prodigal has never been faithfully described. Now, the great advantage formerly possessed by the sailor—an advantage cruelly curtailed by the establishment of Homes and the introduction of Temperance—was that he could be, and was, a Prodigal at the end of every cruise, while the voyage itself was an agreeable interval provided for recovery, recollection, and anticipation.

‘Bob—uncle Bob—was a flyer,’ said Harry. ‘One should be proud of such an uncle. With

Bob, and Bunker, and the bankrupt Builder, I am indeed provided.'

There seemed nothing in the letters which bore upon the question of his mother's property, and he was going to put them down again, when he lighted upon a torn fragment on which he saw, in Bob's big handwriting, the name of his cousin Josephus.

'Josephus, my cousin, that he will'—here a break in the continuity—'nd the safe the bundle'—another break—'for a lark. Josephus is a Square-toes. I hate a man who won't drink. He will'—another break—'if he looks there. Your health and song, shipmet. R.C.'

He read this fragment two or three times over. What did it mean? Clearly nothing to himself. 'Josephus is a Square-toes.' Very likely; the Prodigal Bob was not; quite the contrary; he was a young man of extremely mercurial temperament. 'Josephus, my cousin, that he will . . . nd the safe the bundle.' He put down the paper, and then, without waking the old man, he softly left the room and the place, shutting the door behind him. And

then he forgot immediately the torn letter and its allusion to Josephus. He thought, next, that he would go to Bunker and put the question directly to him. The man might be terrified; might show confusion; might tell lies. That would matter little. But if he showed his hand too soon, Bunker might be put upon his guard. Well, that mattered little. What Harry hoped was rather to get at the truth than to recover his houses.

‘I want,’ he said, finding his uncle at home and engaged in his office, drawing up bills—‘I want a few words of serious talk with you, my uncle.’

‘I am busy; go away. I never want to talk to you. I hate the very sight of your face.’

He looked, indeed, as if he did, if a flushing cheek and an angry glare of the eyes are any sign.

‘I am not going away until you have answered my questions. As to your hatred or your affection, that does not concern me at all. Now, will you listen, or shall I wait?’

‘To get rid of you the sooner,’ Bunker

growled, 'I will listen now. If I was twenty years younger, I'd kick you out.'

'If you were twenty years younger, there might, it is true, be a fight. Now then.'

'Well, get along. My time is valuable.'

'I have several times asked you what you got for me when you sold me. You have on those occasions allowed yourself to fall into a rage, which is really dangerous in so stout a man. I am not going to ask you that question any more.'

Mr. Bunker looked relieved.

'Because, you see, I know now what you got.'

Mr. Bunker turned very pale.

'What do you know?'

'I know exactly what you got when I was taken away.'

Mr. Bunker said nothing. Yet there was in his eyes a look as if a critical moment, long expected, had at last arrived. And he waited.

'When my mother died, and you became my guardian, I was not left penniless.'

'It's a lie. You were.'

'If I had been, you would have handed me

over to your brother-in-law, Coppin the builder. But I had property.'

'You had nothing.'

'I had three houses. One of those houses is, I believe, that which has been rented—from you—by Miss Kennedy. I do not know yet where the other two are, but I shall find out.'

'You are on a wrong tack,' said his uncle. 'Now I know why you wouldn't go away; you came here to ferret and fish, did you? You thought you were entitled to property, did you? Ho! You're a nice sort o' chap to have house property, ain't you? Ha! Ho!'

But his laughter was not mirthful.

'Let me point out to you,' Harry went on gravely, 'what it is you have done. The child whom you kept for a year or two was heir to a small estate bringing in, I suppose, about eighty or a hundred pounds a year. We will say that you were entitled to keep that money in return for his support. But when that child was carried away and adopted, you said nothing about the property. You kept it for yourself, and you have received the rents year after year as if the houses belonged to you. Shall I go

on, and tell you what judges and lawyers and police people call this sort of conduct ? ’

‘Where’s your proofs?’ asked the other, his face betraying his emotion. ‘Where’s your proofs?’

‘I have none yet. I am going to search for those proofs.’

‘You can’t find them. There are none. Now, young man, you’ve had your say, and you can go. Do you hear? You can go.’

‘You deny, then, that the houses were mine?’

‘If you’d come to me meek and lowly, as is your humble station in life, I would ha’ told you the history of those houses. Yes, your mother had them, same as her brothers and her sister. Where are they now? I’ve got ’em. I’ve got ’em all. How did I get ’em? By lawful and honourable purchase. I bought ’em. Do you want proofs? You sha’n’t have any proofs. If you’d behaved humble, you should ha’ seen those proofs. Now you may go away and do your worst. Do you hear? You may do your worst.’

He shook his fist in Harry’s face ; his words

were brave; but his voice was shaky and his lips were trembling.

‘I don’t believe you,’ said Harry; ‘I am certain that you did not buy my houses. There was no one left to care for my interests, and you took those houses.’

‘This is the reward,’ said Mr. Bunker, ‘for nussin’ of this child for nigh upon three years! Who would take an orphan into his bosom! But it was right, and I’d do it again. Yes; I’d do it again.’

‘I don’t doubt you,’ the ungrateful nephew replied, ‘especially if that other orphan had three substantial houses and there was nobody but yourself to look after him.’

‘As for your proofs, go and look for them. When you’ve found ’em, bring ’em to me. You and your proofs!’

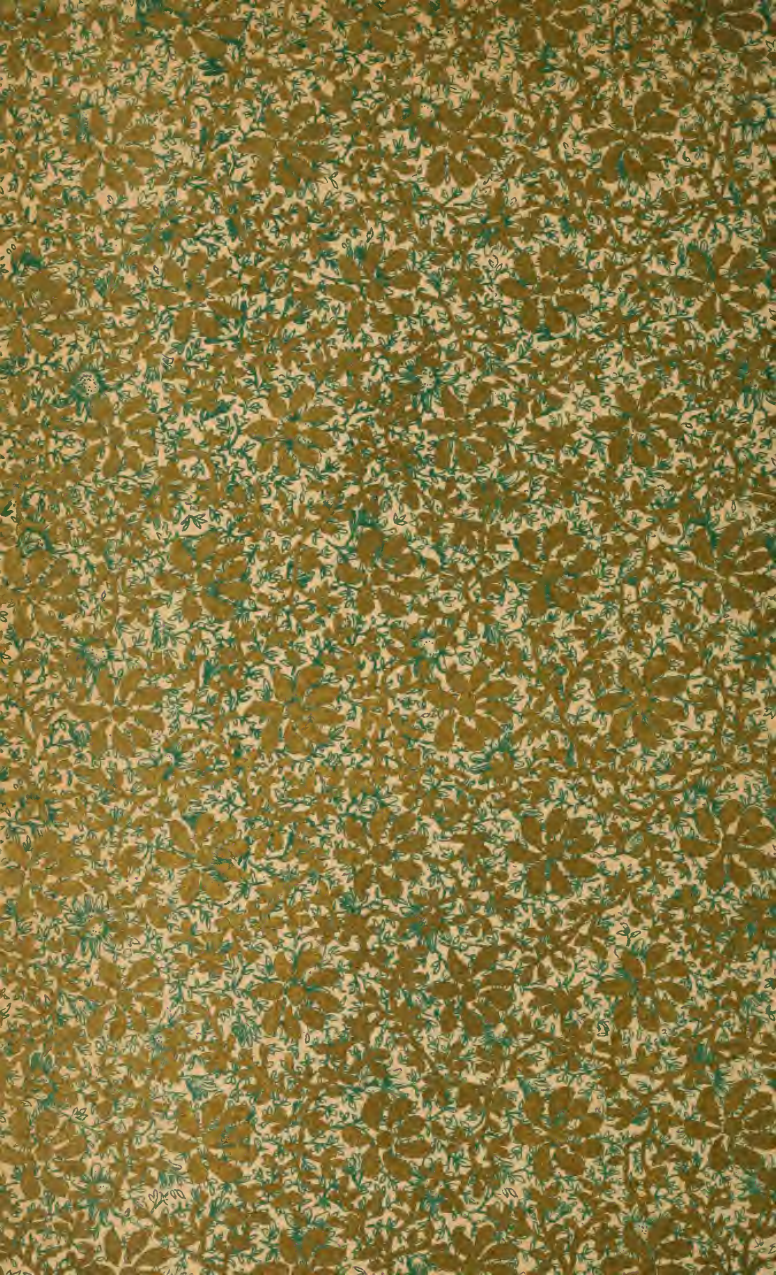
Harry laughed.

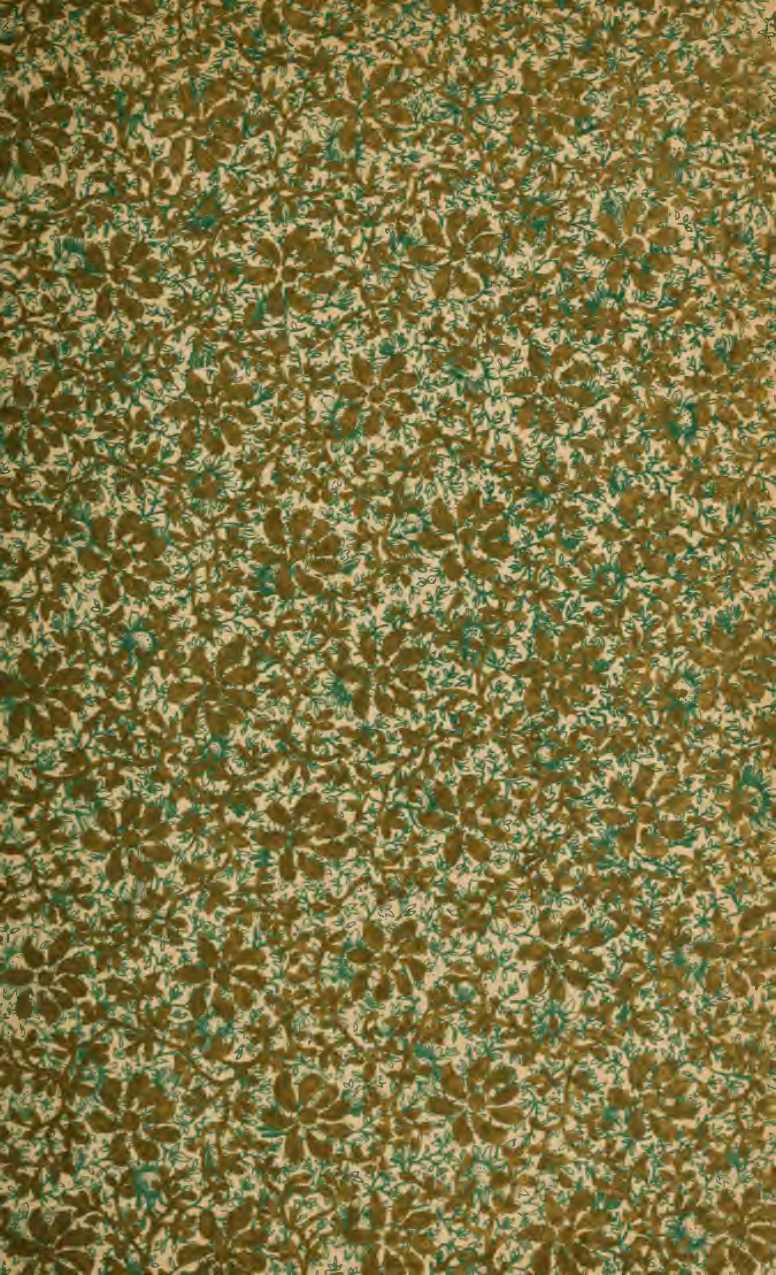
‘I shall find them,’ he said, ‘but I don’t know where or when. Meantime, you will go on, as you do now, thinking continually that they may be found; you won’t be able to sleep at night; you will dream of police courts; you will let your thoughts run on handcuffs; you

will take to drink; you will have no pleasure in your life; you will hasten your end; you will——’ here he desisted, for his uncle, dropping into his chair, looked as if he was about to swoon. ‘Remember—I shall find these proofs—some day. A hundred a year for twenty years is two thousand pounds; that’s a large sum to hand over, and then there is the interest. Upon my word, my uncle, you will have to begin the world again.’

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME

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